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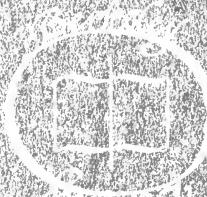
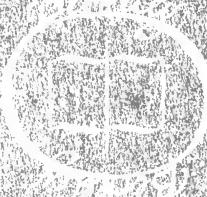
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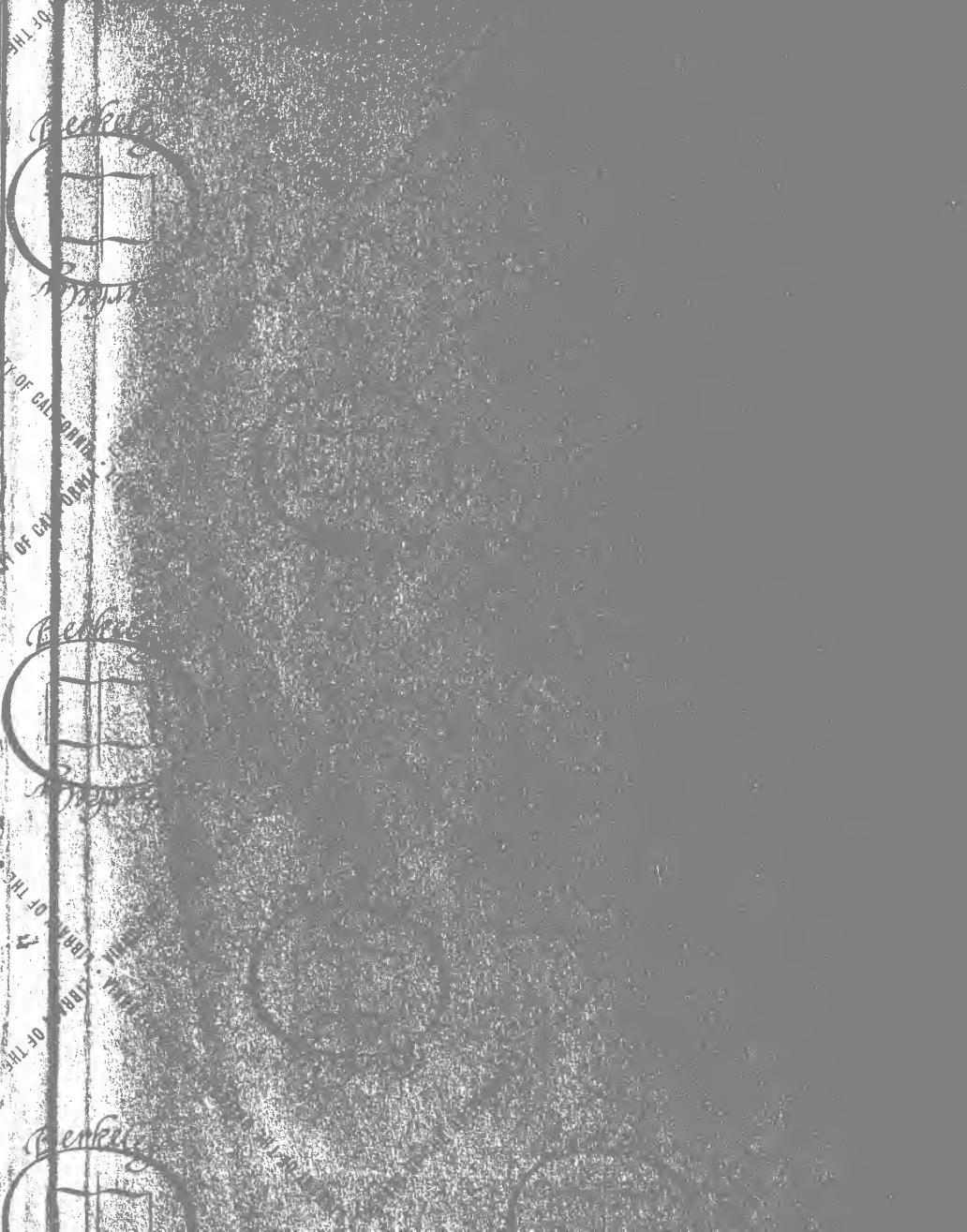
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# CAT STORIES.

BY

HELEN JACKSON (H. H.),

AUTHOR OF "RAMONA," "NELLY'S SILVER MINE," "BITS OF TALK," ETC.

LETTERS FROM A CAT.

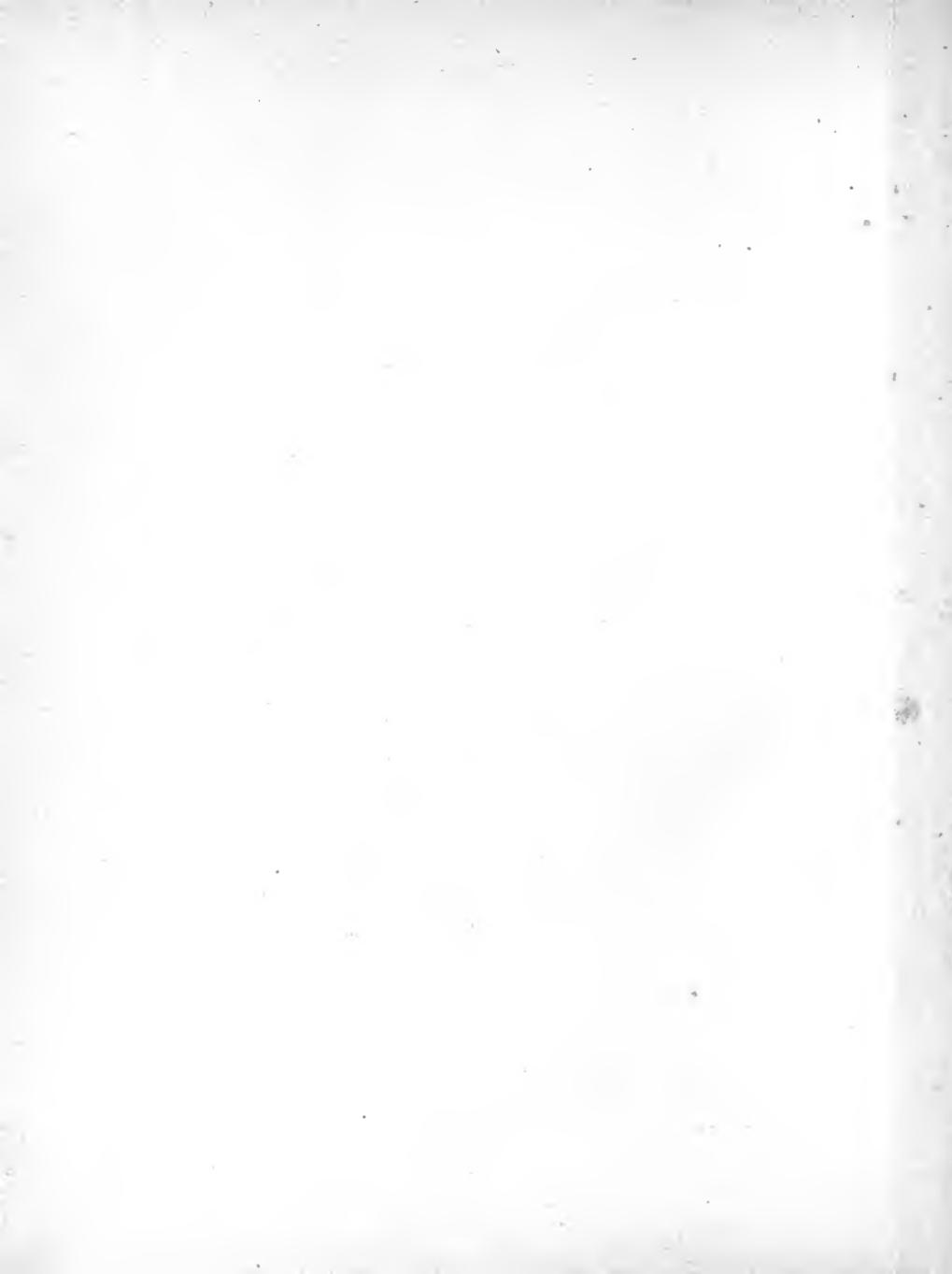
MAMMY TITTLEBACK AND HER  
FAMILY.

THE HUNTER CATS OF CONNORLOA.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

BOSTON:  
ROBERTS BROTHERS.

1886.



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MAIN

LETTERS FROM A CAT.



YOUR AFF  
PUSSY

# LETTERS FROM A CAT.

PUBLISHED BY HER MISTRESS

For the Benefit of all Cats

AND

THE AMUSEMENT OF LITTLE CHILDREN.

BY H. H.,

AUTHOR OF "BITS OF TALK FOR YOUNG FOLKS," "BITS OF TALK ABOUT HOME MATTERS," "BITS OF TRAVEL," ETC.



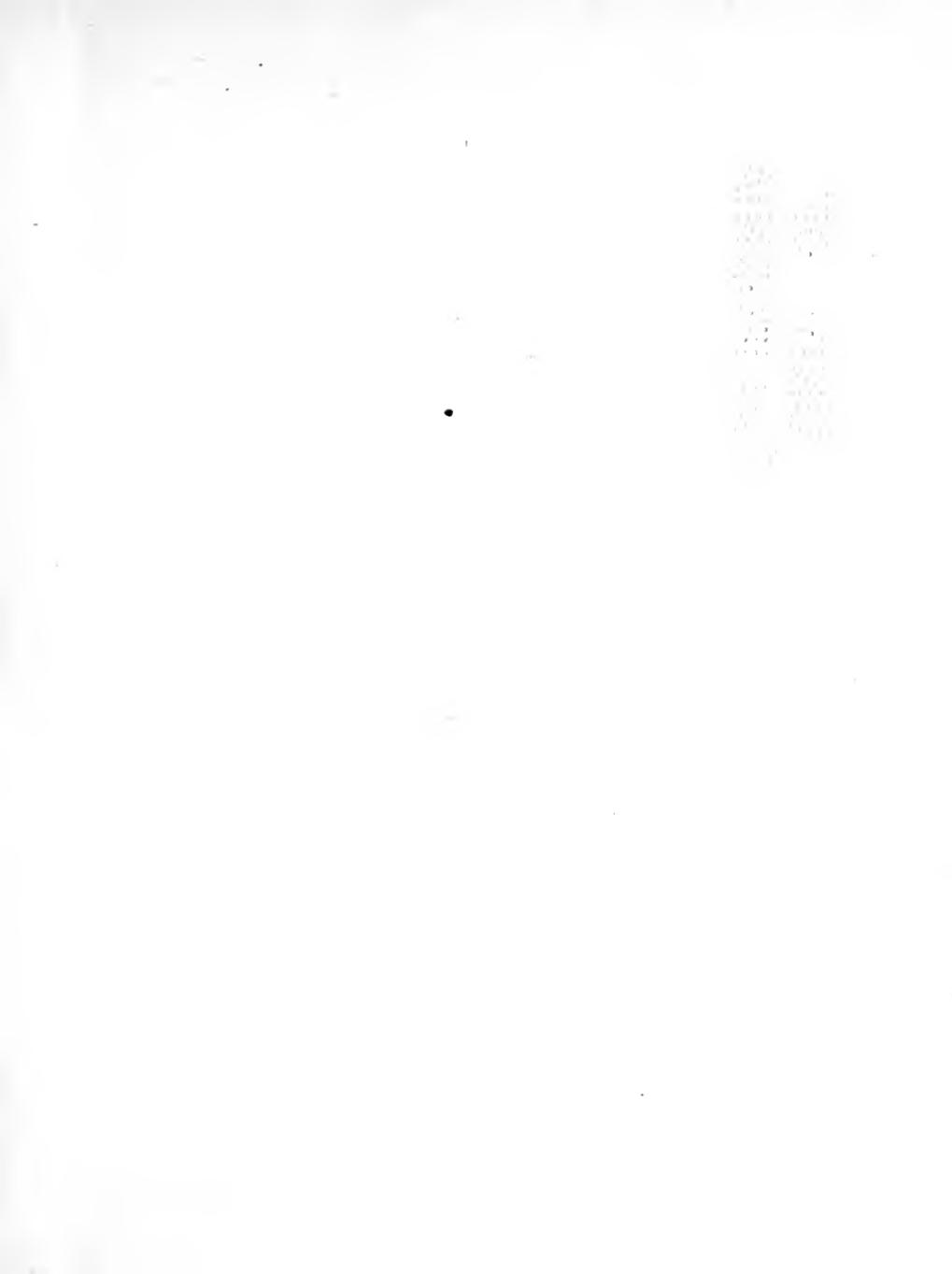
WITH SEVENTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS BY ADDIE LEDYARD.

BOSTON:  
ROBERTS BROTHERS.

1886.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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DEAR CHILDREN:



I DO not feel wholly sure that my Pussy wrote these letters herself. They always came inside the letters written to me by my mamma, or other friends, and I never caught Pussy writing at any time when I was at home; but the printing

was pretty bad, and they were signed by Pussy's name; and my mamma always looked very mysterious when I asked about them, as if there were some very great secret about it all; so that until I grew to be a big girl, I never doubted but that Pussy printed them all alone by herself, after dark.

They were written when I was a very little girl, and was away from home with my father on a journey. We made this journey in our own carriage, and it was one of the pleasantest things that ever happened to me. My clothes and my father's were packed in a little leather valise which was hung by straps under-

neath the carriage, and went swinging, swinging, back and forth, as the wheels went round. My father and I used to walk up all the steep hills, because old Charley, our horse, was not very strong ; and I kept my eyes on that valise all the while I was walking behind the carriage ; it seemed to me the most unsafe way to carry a valise, and I wished very much that my best dress had been put in a bundle that I could carry in my lap. This was the only drawback on the pleasure of my journey,—my fear that the valise would fall off when we did not know it, and be left in the road, and then I should not have anything nice to wear when I

reached my aunt's house. But the valise went through all safe, and I had the satisfaction of wearing my best dress every afternoon while I stayed; and I was foolish enough to think a great deal of this.

On the fourth day after our arrival came a letter from my mamma, giving me a great many directions how to behave, and enclosing this first letter from Pussy. I carried both letters in my apron pocket all the time. They were the first letters I ever had received, and I was very proud of them. I showed them to everybody, and everybody laughed hard at Pussy's, and asked me if I believed that Pussy printed it herself. I thought perhaps my

mamma held her paw, with the pen in it, as she had sometimes held my hand for me, and guided my pen to write a few words. I asked papa to please to ask mamma, in his letter, if that were the way Pussy did it; but when his next letter from mamma came, he read me this sentence out of it: "Tell Helen I did not hold Pussy's paw to write that letter." So then I felt sure Pussy did it herself; and as I told you, I had grown up to be quite a big girl before I began to doubt it. You see I thought my Pussy such a wonderful Pussy that nothing was too remarkable for her to do. I knew very well that cats generally did not know how to

read or write ; but I thought there had never been such a cat in the world as this Pussy of mine. It is a great many years since she died ; but I can see her before me to-day as plainly as if it were only yesterday that I had really seen her alive.

She was a little kitten when I first had her ; but she grew fast, and was very soon bigger than I wanted her to be. I wanted her to stay little. Her fur was a beautiful dark gray color, and there were black stripes on her sides, like the stripes on a tiger. Her eyes were very big, and her ears unusually long and pointed. This made her look like a fox ; and she was so bright and mischievous that some people

thought she must be part fox. She used to do one thing that I never heard of any other cat's doing: she used to play hide-and-seek. Did you ever hear of a cat's playing hide-and-seek? And the most wonderful part of it was, that she took it up of her own accord. As soon as she heard me shut the gate in the yard at noon, when school was done, she would run up the stairs as hard as she could go, and take her place at the top, where she could just peep through the banisters. When I opened the door, she would give a funny little mew, something like the mew cats make when they call their kittens. Then as soon as I stepped on the first stair to

come up to her, she would race away at the top of her speed, and hide under a bed ; and when I reached the room, there would be no Pussy to be seen. If I called her, she would come out from under the bed ; but if I left the room, and went down stairs without speaking, in less than a minute she would fly back to her post at the head of the stairs, and call again with the peculiar mew. As soon as I appeared, off she would run, and hide under the bed as before. Sometimes she would do this three or four times ; and it was a favorite amusement of my mother's to exhibit this trick of hers to strangers. It was odd, though ; she never would do it twice, when

she observed that other people were watching. When I called her, and she came out from under the bed, if there were strangers looking on, she would walk straight to me in the demurest manner, as if it were a pure accident that she happened to be under that bed ; and no matter what I did or said, her frolic was over for that day.

She used to follow me, just like a little dog, wherever I went. She followed me to school every day, and we had great difficulty on Sundays to keep her from following us to church. Once she followed me, when it made a good many people laugh, in spite of themselves, on an occasion when it was very improper for them to

laugh, and they were all feeling very sad. It was at the funeral of one of the professors in the college.

The professors' families all sat together ; and when the time came for them to walk out of the house and get into the carriages to go to the graveyard, they were called, one after the other, by name. When it came to our turn, my father and mother went first, arm-in-arm ; then my sister and I ; and then, who should rise, very gravely, but my Pussy, who had slipped into the room after me, and had not been noticed in the crowd. With a slow and deliberate gait she walked along, directly behind my sister and me, as if she were the remaining

member of the family, as indeed she was. People began to smile, and as we passed through the front door, and went down the steps, some of the men and boys standing there laughed out. I do not wonder; for it must have been a very comical sight. In a second more, somebody sprang forward and snatched Pussy up. Such a scream as she gave! and scratched his face with her claws, so that he was glad to put her down. As soon as I heard her voice, I turned round, and called her in a low tone. She ran quickly to me, and I picked her up and carried her in my arms the rest of the way. But I saw even my own papa and mamma laughing a little, for just a

minute. That was the only funeral Pussy ever attended.

Pussy lived several years after the events which are related in these letters.

It was a long time before her fur grew out again after that terrible fall into the soft-soap barrel. However, it did grow out at last, and looked as well as ever. Nobody would have known that any thing had been the matter with her, except that her eyes were always weak. The edges of them never got quite well ; and poor Pussy used to sit and wash them by the hour ; sometimes mewing and looking up in my face, with each stroke of her paw on her

eyes, as much as to say, "Don't you see how sore my eyes are? Why don't you do something for me?"

She was never good for any thing as a mouser after that accident, nor for very much to play with. I recollect hearing my mother say one day to somebody,— "Pussy was spoiled by her experience in the cradle. She would like to be rocked the rest of her days, I do believe; and it is too funny to see her turn up her nose at tough beef. It was a pity she ever got a taste of tenderloin!"

At last, what with good feeding and very little exercise, she grew so fat that she was clumsy, and so lazy that she did

not want to do any thing but lie curled up on a soft cushion.

She had outgrown my little chair, which had a green moreen cushion in it, on which she had slept for many a year, and of which I myself had very little use,—she was in it so much of the time. But now that this was too tight for her, she took possession of the most comfortable places she could find, all over the house. Now it was a sofa, now it was an arm-chair, now it was the foot of somebody's bed. But wherever it happened to be, it was sure to be the precise place where she was in the way, and the poor thing was tipped headlong out of chairs, shoved hastily off sofas, and

driven off beds so continually, that at last she came to understand that when she saw any person approaching the chair, sofa, or bed on which she happened to be lying, the part of wisdom for her was to move away. And it was very droll to see the injured and reproachful expression with which she would slowly get up, stretch all her legs, and walk away, looking for her next sleeping-place. Everybody in the house, except me, hated the sight of her; and I had many a pitched battle with the servants in her behalf. Even my mother, who was the kindest human being I ever knew, got out of patience at last, and said to me one day:—

“Helen, your Pussy has grown so old and so fat, she is no comfort to herself, and a great torment to everybody else. I think it would be a mercy to kill her.”

“Kill my Pussy!” I exclaimed, and burst out crying, so loud and so hard that I think my mother was frightened; for she said quickly:—

“Never mind, dear; it shall not be done, unless it is necessary. You would not want Pussy to live, if she were very uncomfortable all the time.”

“She isn’t uncomfortable,” I cried; “she is only sleepy. If people would let her alone, she would sleep all day.

It would be awful to kill her. You might as well kill me!"

After that, I kept a very close eye on Pussy; and I carried her up to bed with me every night for a long time.

But Pussy's days were numbered. One morning, before I was up, my mamma came into my room, and sat down on the edge of my bed.

"Helen," she said, "I have something to tell you which will make you feel very badly; but I hope you will be a good little girl, and not make mamma unhappy about it. You know your papa and mamma always do what they think is the very best thing."

"What is it, mamma?" I asked, feeling very much frightened, but never thinking of Pussy.

"You will never see your Pussy any more," she replied. "She is dead."

"Oh, where is she?" I cried. "What killed her? Won't she come to life again?"

"No," said my mother; "she is drowned."

Then I knew what had happened.

"Who did it?" was all I said.

"Cousin Josiah," she replied; "and he took great care that Pussy did not suffer at all. She sank to the bottom instantly."

"Where did he drown her?" I asked.

"Down by the mill, in Mill Valley, where the water is very deep," answered my mother; "we told him to take her there."

At these words I cried bitterly.

"That's the very place I used to go with her to play," I exclaimed. "I'll never go near that bridge as long as I live, and I'll never speak a word to Cousin Josiah either — never!"

My mother tried to comfort me, but it was of no use; my heart was nearly broken.

When I went to breakfast, there sat my cousin Josiah, looking as unconcerned

as possible, reading a newspaper. He was a student in the college, and boarded at our house. At the sight of him all my indignation and grief broke forth afresh. I began to cry again; and running up to him, I doubled up my fist and shook it in his face.

“I said I’d never speak to you as long as I lived,” I cried; “but I will. You’re just a murderer, a real murderer; that’s what you are! and when you go to be a missionary, I hope the cannibals ’ll eat you! I hope they ’ll eat you alive raw, you mean old murderer!”

“Helen Maria!” said my father’s voice behind me, sternly. “Helen Maria! leave the room this moment!”

I went away sullenly, muttering, "I don't care, he is a murderer; and I hope he 'll be drowned, if he isn't eaten! The Bible says the same measure ye mete shall be meted to you again. He ought to be drowned."

For this sullen muttering I had to go without my breakfast; and after breakfast was over, I was made to beg Cousin Josiah's pardon; but I did not beg it in my heart—not a bit—only with my lips, just repeating the words I was told to say; and from that time I never spoke one word to him, nor looked at him, if I could help it.

My kind mother offered to get another

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kitten for me, but I did not want one. After a while, my sister Ann had a present of a pretty little gray kitten ; but I never played with it, nor took any notice of it at all. I was as true to my Pussy as she was to me ; and from that day to this, I have never had another Pussy !





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## LETTERS FROM A CAT.

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### I.

MY DEAR HELEN:

That is what your mother calls you, I know, for I jumped up on her writing-table just now, and looked, while she was out of the room; and I am sure I have as much right to call you so as she has, for if you were my own little kitty, and looked just like me, I could not love you any more than

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I do. How many good naps I have had in your lap! and how many nice bits of meat you have saved for me out of your own dinner! Oh, I'll never let a rat, or a mouse, touch any thing of yours so long as I live.

I felt very unhappy after you drove off yesterday, and did not know what to do with myself. I went into the barn, and thought I would take a nap on the hay, for I do think going to sleep is one of the very best things for people who are unhappy; but it seemed so lonely without old Charlie stamping in his stall that I could not bear it,



"I felt very unhappy after you drove off yesterday."

PAGE 28.



so I went into the garden, and lay down under the damask rose-bush, and caught flies. There is a kind of fly round that bush which I like better than any other I ever ate. You ought to see that there is a very great difference between my catching flies and your doing it. I have noticed that you never eat them, and I have wondered that when you were always so kind to me you could be so cruel as to kill poor flies for nothing: I have often wished that I could speak to you about it: now that your dear mother has taught me to print, I shall be able to say a great many things to

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you which I have often been unhappy about because I could not make you understand. I am entirely discouraged about learning to speak the English language, and I do not think anybody takes much trouble to learn ours; so we cats are confined entirely to the society of each other, which prevents our knowing so much as we might; and it is very lonely too, in a place where there are so few cats kept as in Amherst. If it were not for Mrs. Hitchcock's cat, and Judge Dickinson's, I should really forget how to use my tongue. When you are at home I do not mind it, for although

I cannot talk to you, I understand every word that you say to me, and we have such good plays together with the red ball. That is put away now in the bottom drawer of the little workstand in the sitting-room. When your mother put it in, she turned round to me, and said, "Poor pussy, no more good plays for you till Helen comes home!" and I thought I should certainly cry. But I think it is very foolish to cry over what cannot be helped, so I pretended to have got something into my left eye, and rubbed it with my paw. It is very seldom that I cry over any thing, unless it is "spilt milk."

I must confess, I have often cried when that has happened: and it always is happening to cats' milk. They put it into old broken things that tip over at the least knock, and then they set them just where they are sure to be most in the way. Many's the time Josiah has knocked over that blue saucer of mine, in the shed, and when you have thought that I had had a nice breakfast of milk, I had nothing in the world but flies, which are not good for much more than just a little sort of relish. I am so glad of a chance to tell you about this, because I know when you come





"I hope you found the horse-chestnuts which I put in the carriage for you. I had a dreadful time climbing up over the dasher with them." — PAGE 33.

home you will get a better dish for me.

I hope you found the horse-chestnuts which I put in the bottom of the carriage for you. I could not think of any thing else to put in, which would remind you of me: but I am afraid you will never think that it was I who put them there, and it will be too bad if you don't, for I had a dreadful time climbing up over the dasher with them, and both my jaws are quite lame from stretching them so, to carry the biggest ones I could find.

There are three beautiful dandelions out on the terrace, but I

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don't suppose they will keep till you come home. A man has been doing something to your garden, but though I watched him very closely all the time, I could not make out what he was about. I am afraid it is something you will not like; but if I find out more about it, I will tell you in my next letter. Good by.

Your affectionate      Pussy.





## II.

MY DEAR HELEN:

I do wish that you and your father would turn around directly, wherever you are, when you get this letter, and come home as fast as you can. If you do not come soon there will be no home left for you to come into. I am so frightened and excited, that my paws tremble, and I have upset the ink twice, and spilled so much that there is only a little left in the bottom of the cup, and

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it is as thick as hasty pudding; so you must excuse the looks of this letter, and I will tell you as quickly as I can about the dreadful state of things here. Not more than an hour after I finished my letter to you, yesterday, I heard a great noise in the parlor, and ran in to see what was the matter. There was Mary with her worst blue handkerchief tied over her head, her washing-day gown on, and a big hammer in her hand. As soon as she saw me, she said, "There 's that cat! Always in my way," and threw a cricket at me, and then shut the parlor door with a great slam. So I ran out

and listened under the front windows, for I felt sure she was in some bad business she did not want to have known. Such a noise I never heard: all the things were being moved; and in a few minutes, what do you think — out came the whole carpet right on my head! I was nearly stifled with dust, and felt as if every bone in my body must be broken; but I managed to creep out from under it, and heard Mary say, “If there isn’t that torment of a cat again! I wish to goodness Helen had taken her along!” Then I felt surer than ever that some mischief was on foot; and I

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ran out into the garden, and climbed up the old apple-tree at the foot of the steps, and crawled out on a branch, from which I could look directly into the parlor windows. Oh! my dear Helen, you can fancy how I felt, to see all the chairs and tables and bookshelves in a pile in the middle of the floor, the books all packed in big baskets, and Mary taking out window after window as fast as she could. I forgot to tell you that your mother went away last night. I think she has gone to Hadley to make a visit, and it looks to me very much as if Mary meant to run away with every thing which



"I climbed up the old apple-tree, and crawled out on a branch from which I could look directly into the parlor windows." — PAGE 38.

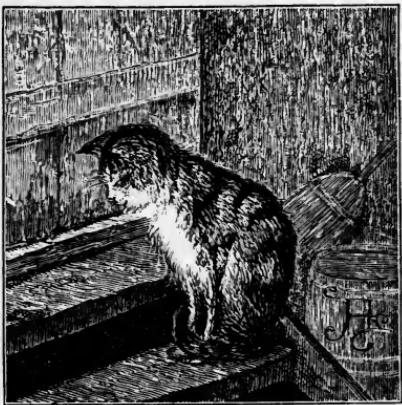




could be moved, before she comes back. After awhile that ugly Irish-woman, who lives in Mr. Slater's house, came into the back gate: you know the one I mean,—the one that threw cold water on me last spring. When I saw her coming I felt sure that she and Mary meant to kill me, while you were all away; so I jumped down out of the tree, and split my best claw in my hurry, and ran off into Baker's Grove, and stayed there all the rest of the day, in dreadful misery from cold and hunger. There was some snow in the hollows, and I wet my feet, which always makes me feel wretchedly;

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and I could not find any thing to eat except a thin dried-up old mole. They are never good in the spring. Really, nobody does know what hard lives we cats lead, even the luckiest of us! After dark, I went home; but Mary had fastened up every door, even the little one into the back shed. So I had to jump into the cellar window, which is a thing I never like to do since I got that bad sprain in my shoulder from coming down on the edge of a milk-pan. I crept up to the head of the kitchen stairs, as still as a mouse, if I'm any judge, and listened there for a long time, to try and make



"I crept up to the head of the kitchen stairs, as still as a mouse, if  
I'm any judge, and listened." — PAGE 40.





out, from Mary's talk with the Irish-woman, what they were planning to do. But I never could understand Irish, and although I listened till I had cramps in all my legs, from being so long in one position, I was no wiser. Even the things Mary said I could not understand, and I usually understand her very easily. I passed a very uncomfortable night in the carrot bin. As soon as I heard Mary coming down the cellar stairs, this morning, I hid in the arch, and while she was skimming the milk, I slipped upstairs, and ran into the sitting-room. Every thing there is in the same confusion ; the

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carpet is gone; and the windows too, and I think some of the chairs have been carried away. All the china is in great baskets on the pantry floor; and your father and mother's clothes are all taken out of the nursery closet, and laid on chairs. It is very dreadful to have to stand by and see all this, and not be able to do any thing. I don't think I ever fully realized before the disadvantage of being only a cat. I have just been across the street, and talked it all over with the Judge's cat, but she is very old and stupid, and so taken up with her six kittens (who are the ugliest I ever saw),

that she does not take the least interest in her neighbors' affairs. Mrs. Hitchcock walked by the house this morning, and I ran out to her, and took her dress in my teeth and pulled it, and did all I could to make her come in, but she said, "No, no, pussy, I'm not coming in to-day; your mistress is not at home." I declare I could have cried. I sat down in the middle of the path, and never stirred for half an hour.

I heard your friend, Hannah Dorrance, say yesterday, that she was going to write to you to-day, so I shall run up the hill now and

carry my letter to her. I think she will be astonished when she sees me, for I am very sure that no other cat in town knows how to write. Do come home as soon as possible.

Your affectionate      PUSSY.

P. S. Two men have just driven up to the front gate in a great cart, and they are putting all the carpets into it. Oh dear, oh dear, if I only knew what to do! And I just heard Mary say to them, "Be as quick as you can, for I want to get through with this business before the folks come back."



### III.

MY DEAR HELEN:

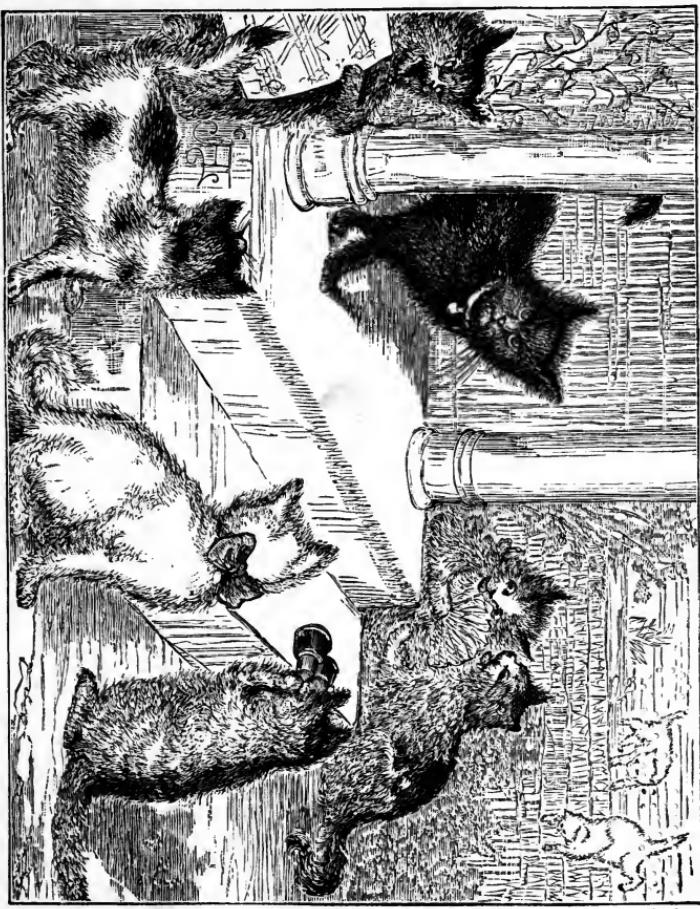
I am too stiff and sore from a terrible fall I have had, to write more than one line; but I must let you know that my fright was very silly, and I am very much mortified about it. The house and the things are all safe; your mother has come home; and I will write, and tell you all, just as soon as I can use my pen without great pain.

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Some new people have come to live in the Nelson house; very nice people, I think, for they keep their milk in yellow crockery pans. They have brought with them a splendid black cat whose name is Cæsar, and everybody is talking about him. He has the handsomest whiskers I ever saw. I do hope I shall be well enough to see him before long, but I wouldn't have him see me now for any thing.

Your affectionate      Pussy.

"They have brought with them a splendid black cat whose name is Caesar, and everybody is talking about him. He has the handsomest whiskers I ever saw!" — PAGE 46.







## IV.

MY DEAR HELEN:

There is one thing that cats don't like any better than men and women do, and that is to make fools of themselves. But a precious fool I made of myself when I wrote you that long letter about Mary's moving out all the furniture, and taking the house down. It is very mortifying to have to tell you how it all turned out, but I know you love me

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enough to be sorry that I should have had such a terrible fright for nothing.

It went on from bad to worse for three more days after I wrote you. Your mother did not come home; and the awful Irishwoman was here all the time. I did not dare to go near the house, and I do assure you I nearly starved: I used to lie under the rose-bushes, and watch as well as I could what was going on: now and then I caught a rat in the barn, but that sort of hearty food never has agreed with me since I came to live with you, and became accustomed to a lighter

diet. By the third day I felt too weak and sick to stir: so I lay still all day on the straw in Charlie's stall; and I really thought, between the hunger and the anxiety, that I should die. About noon I heard Mary say in the shed, "I do believe that everlasting cat has taken herself off: it's a good riddance anyhow, but I should like to know what has become of the plaguy thing!"

I trembled all over, for if she had come into the barn I know one kick from her heavy foot would have killed me, and I was quite too weak to run away. Towards night I heard your dear mother's voice

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calling, “Poor pussy, why, poor pussy, where are you?”

I assure you, my dear Helen, people are very much mistaken who say, as I have often overheard them, that cats have no feeling. If they could only know how I felt at that moment, they would change their minds. I was almost too glad to make a sound. It seemed to me that my feet were fastened to the floor, and that I never could get to her. She took me up in her arms, and carried me through the kitchen into the sitting-room. Mary was frying cakes in the kitchen, and as your mother passed by the stove

she said in her sweet voice, "You see I've found poor pussy, Mary." "Humph," said Mary, "I never thought but that she'd be found fast enough when she wanted to be!" I knew that this was a lie, because I had heard what she said in the shed. I do wish I knew what makes her hate me so: I only wish she knew how I hate her. I really think I shall gnaw her stockings and shoes some night. It would not be any more than fair; and she would never suspect me, there are so many mice in her room, for I never touch one that I think belongs in her closet.

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The sitting-room was all in most beautiful order,—a smooth white something, like the side of a basket, over the whole floor, a beautiful paper curtain, pink and white, over the fire-place, and white muslin curtains at the windows. I stood perfectly still in the middle of the room for some time. I was too surprised to stir. Oh, how I wished that I could speak, and tell your dear mother all that had happened, and how the room had looked three days before. Presently she said, “Poor pussy, I know you are almost starved, aren’t you?” and I said “Yes,” as plainly as I could

mew it. Then she brought me a big soup-plate full of thick cream, and some of the most delicious cold hash I ever tasted; and after I had eaten it all, she took me in her lap, and said, "Poor pussy, we miss little Helen, don't we?" and she held me in her lap till bed-time. Then she let me sleep on the foot of her bed: it was one of the happiest nights of my life. In the middle of the night I was up for a while, and caught the smallest mouse I ever saw out of the nest. Such little ones are very tender.

In the morning I had my breakfast with her in the dining-

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room, which looks just as nice as the sitting-room. After breakfast Mrs. Hitchcock came in, and your mother said: "Only think, how fortunate I am; Mary did all the house-cleaning while I was away. Every room is in perfect order; all the woollen clothes are put away for the summer. Poor pussy, here, was frightened out of the house, and I suppose we should all have been if we had been at home."

Can you imagine how ashamed I felt? I ran under the table and did not come out again until after Mrs. Hitchcock had gone. But now



"Can you imagine how ashamed I felt? I ran under the table and did not come out again until after Mrs. Hitchcock had gone." — PAGE 54.







"I knew that there was no time to be lost if I meant to catch that robin, so I ran with all my might and tried to jump through." — PAGE 55.

comes the saddest part of my story. Soon after this, as I was looking out of the window, I saw the fattest, most tempting robin on the ground under the cherry-tree: the windows did not look as if they had any glass in them, and I took it for granted that it had all been taken out and put away upstairs, with the andirons and the carpets, for next winter. I knew that there was no time to be lost if I meant to catch that robin, so I ran with all my might and tried to jump through. Oh, my dear Helen, I do not believe you ever had such a bump: I fell back nearly into the

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middle of the room ; and it seemed to me that I turned completely over at least six times. The blood streamed out of my nose, and I cut my right ear very badly against one of the castors of the table. I could not see nor hear any thing for some minutes. When I came to myself, I found your dear mother holding me, and wiping my face with her own nice handkerchief wet in cold water. My right fore-paw was badly bruised, and that troubles me very much about washing my face, and about writing. But the worst of all is the condition of my nose. Everybody laughs who sees me, and I do

not blame them; it is twice as large as it used to be, and I begin to be seriously afraid it will never return to its old shape. This will be a dreadful affliction: for who does not know that the nose is the chief beauty of a cat's face? I have got very tired of hearing the story of my fall told to all the people who come in. They laugh as if they would kill themselves at it, especially when I do not manage to get under the table before they look to see how my nose is.

Except for this I should have written to you before, and would write more now, but my paw aches

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badly, and one of my eyes is nearly closed from the swelling of my nose: so I must say good-by.

Your affectionate Pussy.

P. S. I told you about Cæsar, did I not, in my last letter? Of course I do not venture out of the house in my present plight, so I have not seen him except from the window.





## V.

MY DEAR HELEN:

I am sure you must have wondered why I have not written to you for the last two weeks, but when you hear what I have been through, you will only wonder that I am alive to write to you at all. I was very glad to hear your mother say, yesterday, that she had not written to you about what had happened to me, because it would make you

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so unhappy. But now that it is all over, and I am in a fair way to be soon as well as ever, I think you will like to hear the whole story.

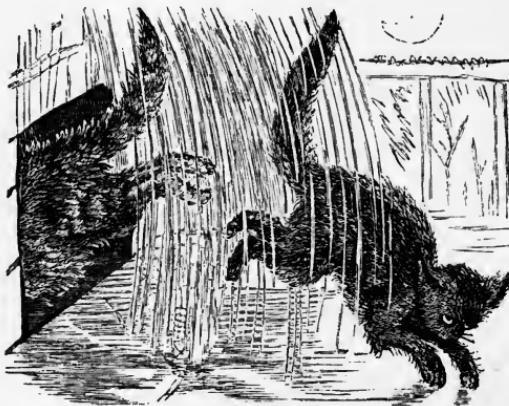
In my last letter I told you about the new black cat, Cæsar, who had come to live in the Nelson house, and how anxious I was to know him. As soon as my nose was fit to be seen, Judge Dickinson's cat, who is a good, hospitable old soul, in spite of her stupidity, invited me to tea, and asked him too. All the other cats were asked to come later in the evening, and we had a grand frolic, hunting rats in the Judge's great barn. Cæsar



"Judge Dickinson's cat, who is a good hospitable old soul, in spite of her stupidity, invited me to tea, and asked Caesar too." — PAGE 60.







"When there suddenly came down on us a whole pailful of water."

PAGE 61.

is certainly the handsomest and most gentlemanly cat I ever saw. He paid me great attention: in fact, so much, that one of those miserable half-starved cats from Mill Valley grew so jealous that she flew at me and bit my ear till it bled, which broke up the party. But Cæsar went home with me, so I did not care; then we sat and talked a long time under the nursery window. I was so much occupied in what he was saying, that I did not hear Mary open the window overhead, and was therefore terribly frightened when there suddenly came down on us a whole pailful of water. I was

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so startled that I lost all presence of mind; and without bidding him good-night, I jumped directly into the cellar window by which we were sitting. Oh, my dear Helen, I can never give you any idea of what followed. Instead of coming down as I expected to on the cabbages, which were just under that window the last time I was in the cellar, I found myself sinking, sinking, into some horrible soft, slimy, sticky substance, which in an instant more would have closed over my head, and suffocated me; but, fortunately, as I sank, I felt something hard at one side, and making a great effort, I caught

on it with my claws. It proved to be the side of a barrel, and I succeeded in getting one paw over the edge of it. There I hung, growing weaker and weaker every minute, with this frightful stuff running into my eyes and ears, and choking me with its bad smell. I mewed as loud as I could, which was not very loud, for whenever I opened my mouth the stuff trickled into it off my whiskers; but I called to Cæsar, who stood in great distress at the window, and explained to him, as well as I could, what had happened to me, and begged him to call as loudly as pos-

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sible; for if somebody did not come very soon, and take me out, I should certainly die. He insisted, at first, on jumping down to help me himself; but I told him that would be the most foolish thing he could do; if he did, we should certainly both be drowned. So he began to mew at the top of his voice, and between his mewing and mine, there was noise enough for a few minutes; then windows began to open, and I heard your grandfather swearing and throwing out a stick of wood at Cæsar; fortunately he was so near the house that it did not hit him. At last your grandfather

came downstairs, and opened the back door ; and Cæsar was so frightened that he ran away, for which I have never thought so well of him since, though we are still very good friends. When I heard him running off, and calling back to me, from a distance, that he was so sorry he could not help me, my courage began to fail, and in a moment more, I should have let go of the edge of the barrel, and sunk to the bottom ; but luckily your grandfather noticed that there was something very strange about my mewing, and opened the door at the head of the cellar stairs, saying, "I do believe the cat

is in some trouble down here." Then I made a great effort and mewed still more piteously. How I wished I could call out and say, "Yes, indeed, I am; drowning to death, in I'm sure I don't know what, but something a great deal worse than water!" However, he understood me as it was, and came down with a lamp. As soon as he saw me, he set the lamp down on the cellar bottom, and laughed so that he could hardly move. I thought this was the most cruel thing I ever heard of. If I had not been, as it were, at death's door, I should have laughed at him, too,

for even with my eyes full of that dreadful stuff, I could see that he looked very funny in his red night-cap, and without his teeth. He called out to Mary, and your mother, who stood at the head of the stairs, “Come down, come down; here’s the cat in the soft-soap barrel!” and then he laughed again, and they both came down the stairs laughing, even your dear kind mother, who I never could have believed would laugh at any one in such trouble. They did not seem to know what to do at first; nobody wanted to touch me; and I began to be afraid I should drown while they

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stood looking at me, for I knew much better than they could how weak I was from holding on to the edge of the barrel so long. At last your grandfather swore that oath of his,—you know the one I mean, the one he always swears when he is very sorry for anybody,—and lifted me out by the nape of my neck, holding me as far off from him as he could, for the soft soap ran off my legs and tail in streams. He carried me up into the kitchen, and put me down in the middle of the floor, and then they all stood round me, and laughed again, so loud that they waked up the cook,



"He lifted me out by the nape of my neck, holding me as far off  
from him as he could." — PAGE 68.



who came running out of her bedroom with her tin candlestick and a chair in her hand, thinking that robbers were breaking in. At last your dear mother said, "Poor pussy, it is too bad to laugh at you, when you are in such pain" (I had been thinking so for some time). "Mary, bring the small washtub. The only thing we can do is to wash her."

When I heard this, I almost wished they had left me to drown in the soft soap; for if there is any thing of which I have a mortal dread, it is water. However, I was too weak to resist; and they plunged me in all over, into the tub full of ice-

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cold water, and Mary began to rub me with her great rough hands, which, I assure you, are very different from yours and your mother's. Then they all laughed again to see the white lather it made; in two minutes the whole tub was as white as the water under the mill-wheel that you and I have so often been together to see. You can imagine how my eyes smarted. I burnt my paws once in getting a piece of beefsteak out of the coals where it had fallen off the gridiron, but the pain of that was nothing to this. You will hardly believe me when I tell you that they had to empty the tub and

fill it again ten times before the soap was all washed out of my fur. By that time I was so cold and exhausted, that I could not move, and they began to think I should die. But your mother rolled me up in one of your old flannel petticoats, and made a nice bed for me behind the stove. By this time even Mary began to seem sorry for me, though she was very cross at first, and hurt me much more than she need to in washing me; now she said, "You're nothing but a poor beast of a cat, to be sure; but it's meself that would be sorry to have the little mistress come back, and find ye

kilt." So you see your love for me did me service, even when you were so far away. I doubt very much whether they would have ever taken the trouble to nurse me through this sickness, except for your sake. But I must leave the rest for my next letter. I am not strong enough yet to write more than two hours at a time.

Your affectionate      Pussy.





## VI.

MY DEAR HELEN:

I will begin where I left off in my last letter.

As you may imagine, I did not get any sleep that night, not even so much as a cat's nap, as people say, though how cat's naps differ from men's and women's naps, I don't know. I shivered all night, and it hurt me terribly whenever I moved. Early in the morning your grand-

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father came downstairs, and when he saw how I looked, he swore again, that same oath: we all know very well what it means when he swears in that way: it means that he is going to do all he can for you, and is so sorry, that he is afraid of seeming too sorry. Don't you remember when you had that big double tooth pulled out, and he gave you five dollars, how he swore then? Well, he took me up in his arms, and carried me into the dining-room; it was quite cool; there was a nice wood fire on the hearth, and Mary was setting the table for breakfast. He said to her in a very gruff voice,

"Here you, Mary, you go up into the garret and bring down the cradle."

Sick as I was, I could not help laughing at the sight of her face. It was enough to make any cat laugh.

"You don't ever mean to say, sir, as you're going to put that cat into the cradle."

"You do as I tell you," said he, in that most awful tone of his, which always makes you so afraid.' I felt afraid myself, though all the time he was stroking my head, and saying, "Poor pussy, there, poor pussy, lie still." In a few minutes Mary

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came down with the cradle, and set it down by the fire with such a bang that I wondered it did not break. You know she always bangs things when she is cross, but I never could see what good it does. Then your grandfather made up a nice bed in the cradle, out of Charlie's winter blanket and an old pillow, and laid me down in it, all rolled up as I was in your petticoat. When your mother came into the room she laughed almost as hard as she did when she saw me in the soft-soap barrel, and said, "Why, father, you are rather old to play cat's cradle!" The old gentleman laughed at this,



"Then your grandfather made up a nice bed in the cradle, and laid  
me down in it." — PAGE 76.



till the tears ran down his red cheeks. "Well," he said, "I tell you one thing; the game will last me till that poor cat gets well again." Then he went upstairs, and brought down a bottle of something very soft and slippery, like lard, and put it on my eyes, and it made them feel much better. After that he gave me some milk into which he had put some of his very best brandy: that was pretty hard to get down, but I understood enough of what they had said, to be sure that if I did not take something of the kind I should never get well. After breakfast I tried to walk, but my right

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paw was entirely useless. At first they thought it was broken, but finally decided that it was only sprained, and must be bandaged. The bandages were wet with something which smelled so badly it made me feel very sick, for the first day or two. Cats' noses are much more sensitive to smells than people's are; but I grew used to it, and it did my poor lame paw so much good that I would have borne it if it had smelled twice as badly. For three days I had to lie all the time in the cradle: if your grandfather caught me out of it, he would swear at me, and put me back again.

Every morning he put the soft white stuff on my eyes, and changed the bandages on my leg. And, oh, my dear Helen, such good things as I had to eat! I had almost the same things for my dinner that the rest of them did: it must be a splendid thing to be a man or a woman! I do not think I shall ever again be contented to eat in the shed, and have only the old pieces which nobody wants.

Two things troubled me very much while I was confined to the cradle: one was that everybody who came in to see your mother laughed as if they never could stop, at the

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first sight of me; and the other was that I heard poor Cæsar mewing all around the house, and calling me with all his might; and I knew he thought I was dead. I tried hard to make your kind mother notice his crying, for I knew she would be willing to let him come in and see me, but I could not make her understand. I suppose she thought it was only some common strolling cat who was hungry. I have always noticed that people do not observe any difference between one cat's voice and another's; now they really are just as different as human voices. Cæsar has one of the finest, deepest-





“One day he slipped in between the legs of the butcher boy, but before I had time to say a word to him, Mary flew at him with the broom.” — PAGE 81.

toned voices I ever heard. One day, after I got well enough to be in the kitchen, he slipped in, between the legs of the butcher's boy who was bringing in some meat; but before I had time to say one word to him, Mary flew at him with the broom, and drove him out. However, he saw that I was alive, and that was something. I am afraid it will be some days yet before I can see him again, for they do not let me go out at all, and the bandages are not taken off my leg. The cradle is carried upstairs, and I sleep on Charlie's blanket behind the stove. I heard your mother

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say to-day that she really believed the cat had the rheumatism. I do not know what that is, but I think I have got it: it hurts me all over when I walk, and I feel as if I looked like Bill Jacobs's old cat, who, they say, is older than the oldest man in town; but of course that must be a slander.

The thing I am most concerned about is my fur; it is coming off in spots: there is a bare spot on the back of my neck, on the place by which they lifted me up out of the soap barrel, half as large as your hand; and whenever I wash myself, I get my mouth full of hairs,

which is very disagreeable. I heard your grandfather say to-day, that he believed he would try Mrs. Somebody's Hair Restorer on the cat, at which everybody laughed so that I ran out of the room as fast as I could go, and then they laughed still harder. I will write you again in a day or two, and tell you how I am getting on. I hope you will come home soon.

Your affectionate      Pussy.





## VII.

MY DEAR HELEN:

I am so glad to know that you are coming home next week, that I cannot think of any thing else. There is only one drawback to my pleasure, and that is, I am so ashamed to have you see me in such a plight. I told you, in my last letter, that my fur was beginning to come off. Your grandfather has tried several things of his, which are

said to be good for hair; but they have not had the least effect. For my part I don't see why they should; fur and hair are two very different things, and I thought at the outset there was no use in putting on my skin what was intended for the skin of human heads, and even on them don't seem to work any great wonders, if I can judge from your grandfather's head, which you know is as bald and pink and shiny as a baby's. However, he has been so good to me, that I let him do any thing he likes, and every day he rubs in some new kind of stuff, which smells a little worse

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than the last one. It is utterly impossible for me to get within half a mile of a rat or a mouse. I might as well fire off a gun to let them know I am coming, as to go about scented up so that they can smell me a great deal farther off than they can see me. If it were not for this dreadful state of my fur, I should be perfectly happy, for I feel much better than I ever did before in my whole life, and am twice as fat as when you went away. I try to be resigned to whatever may be in store for me, but it is very hard to look forward to being a fright all the rest of one's days. I don't suppose such

a thing was ever seen in the world as a cat without any fur. This morning your grandfather sat looking at me for a long time and stroking his chin: at last he said, "Do you suppose it would do any good to shave the cat all over?" At this I could not resist the impulse to scream, and your mother said, "I do believe the creature knows whenever we speak about her." Of course I do! Why in the world shouldn't I! People never seem to observe that cats have ears. I often think how much more careful they would be if they did. I have laughed many a time to see them

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send children out of the room, and leave me behind, when I knew perfectly well that the children would neither notice nor understand half so much as I would. There are some houses in which I lived, before I came to live with you, about which I could tell strange stories if I chose.

Cæsar pretends that he likes the looks of little spots of pink skin, here and there, in fur; but I know he only does it to save my feelings, for it isn't in human nature—I mean in cat's nature—that any one should. You see I spend so much more time in the society of men and wo-





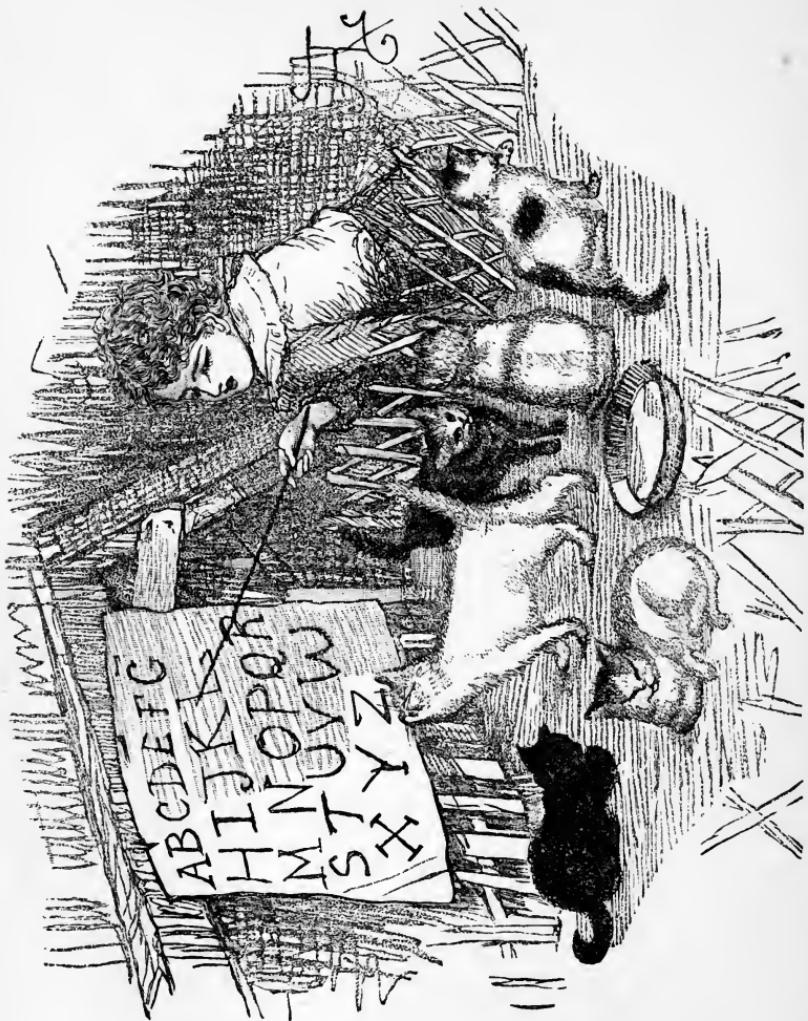
men than of cats, that I find myself constantly using expressions which sound queerly in a cat's mouth. But you know me well enough to be sure that every thing I say is perfectly natural. And now, my dear Helen, I hope I have prepared you to see me looking perfectly hideous. I only trust that your love for me will not be entirely killed by my unfortunate appearance. If you do seem to love me less, I shall be wretched, but I shall still be, always,

Your affectionate      Pussy.



MAMMY TITTLEBACK

*AND HER FAMILY.*



"Johnny spent hours and hours reading the letters over to the kittens." — PAGE 38.

MAMMY TITTLEBACK  
AND  
HER FAMILY.

*A TRUE STORY OF SEVENTEEN CATS.*

By H. H.,

AUTHOR OF "BITS OF TALK," "BITS OF TRAVEL," "BITS OF TALK FOR YOUNG FOLKS," "NELLY'S SILVER MINE," AND "LETTERS FROM A CAT."

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY ADDIE LEDYARD.

BOSTON:  
ROBERTS BROTHERS.  
1886.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE Preface is at the end of the book,  
and nobody must read it till after reading  
the book. It will spoil all the fun to read  
it first.

H. H.



# Genealogical Tree

OF

## MAMMY TITTLEBACK'S FAMILY.

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I.

MAMMY TITTLEBACK.

II.

JUNIPER,  
MOUSIEWARY,

} MAMMY TITTLEBACK's first kittens.

III.

SPITFIRE,  
BLACKY,  
COALEY,  
LIMBAT,  
LILLY,  
GREGORY 2D,

} MAMMY TITTLEBACK's second family  
of kittens.

IV.

TOTTONTAIL,  
TOTTONTAIL'S  
Brother,  
(sometimes called  
GRANDFATHER),

} MAMMY TITTLEBACK's adopted kittens.

V.

BEAUTY,  
CLOVER,

} MAMMY TITTLEBACK's first grandkit-  
tens, being the first kittens of  
MOUSIEWARY.





## MAMMY TITTLEBACK AND HER FAMILY.

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### I.

MAMMY TITTLEBACK is a splendid great tortoise-shell cat,—yellow and black and white; nearly equal parts of each color, except on her tail and her face. Her tail is all black; and her face is white, with only a little black and yellow about the ears and eyes. Her face is a very kind-looking face, but

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her tail is a fierce one ; and when she is angry, she can swell it up in a minute, till it looks almost as big as her body.

Nobody knows where Mammy Tittleback was born, or where she came from. She appeared one morning at Mr. Frank Wellington's, in the town of Mendon in Pennsylvania. Phil and Fred Wellington, Mr. Frank Wellington's boys, liked her looks, and invited her to stay ; that is, they gave her all the milk she wanted to drink, and that is the best way to make a cat understand that you want her to live with you. So she stayed, and Phil and Fred named

her Mammy Tittleback after a cat they had read about in the "New York Tribune."

Phil and Fred have two cousins who often go to visit them. Their names are Johnny and Rosy Chapman; and if it had not been for Johnny and Rosy Chapman, there would never have been this nice story to tell about Mammy Tittleback: for Phil and Fred are big boys, and do not care very much about cats; they like to see them around, and to make them comfortable; but Johnny and Rosy are quite different. Johnny is only eight and Rosy six, and they love cats and kittens better than any-

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thing else in the world; and when they went to spend this last summer at their Uncle Frank Wellington's, and found Mammy Tittleback with six little kittens, just born, they thought such a piece of luck never had happened before to two children.

Juniper and Mousiewary had been born the year before. Phil named these. Juniper was a splendid great fellow, nearly all white. At first he was called "Junior," but they changed it afterward to "Juniper," because, as Phil said, they didn't know what his father's name was, and there was n't any sense in calling him "Junior,"

and, besides, “Juniper” sounded better.

Mousiewary was white, with a black and yellow head. Phil called her “Mousiewary” because she would lie still so long watching for a mouse. She was a year and a half old when Johnny and Rosy went to their Uncle Frank’s for this visit, and she had two little kittens of her own that could just run about. They were wild little things, and very fierce, so Phil had called them the Imps. But Johnny and Rosy soon got them so tame that this name did not suit them any longer, and then they named them over again “Beauty” and “Clover.”

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Mammy Tittleback's second family of kittens were born in the barn, on the hay. After a while she moved them into an old wagon that was not used. This was very clever of her, because they could not get out of the wagon and run away. But pretty soon she moved them again, to a place which the children did not approve of at all ; it was a sort of hollow in the ground, under a great pile of fence rails that were lying near the cow-shed.

This did not seem a nice place, and the children could not imagine why she moved them there. I think, myself, she moved them to try and



"After a while she moved them into an old wagon that was not used." — PAGE 14.





hide them away from the children. I don't believe she thought it was good for the kittens to be picked up so many times a day, and handled, and kissed, and talked to. I dare say she thought they'd never have a chance to grow if she could n't hide them away from Johnny and Rosy for a few weeks. You see, Johnny and Rosy never left them alone for half a day. They were always carrying them about. When people came to the house to see their Aunt Mary, the children would cry, "Don't you want to see our six kittens? We'll bring them in to you." Then they would run out to the barn, take a

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basket, fill it half full of hay, and very gently lay all the kittens in it, and Johnny would take one handle and Rosy the other, and bring it to the house. They always put Mammy Tittleback in too; but before they had carried her far, she generally jumped out, and walked the rest of the way by their side. She would never leave them a minute till they had carried the kittens safe back again to their nest. She did not try to prevent their taking them, for she knew that neither Johnny nor Rosy would hurt one of them any more than she would; but I have no doubt in her heart she disliked to have the kittens touched.



"Johnny would take one handle, and Rosy the other, and bring it to the  
house." — PAGE 16.

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The children worried a great deal about this last place that Mammy Tittleback had selected for her nursery. They thought it was damp; and they were afraid the rails would fall down some day and crush the poor little kittens to death; and what was worst of all, very often when they went there to look at them, they could not get any good sight of them at all, they would be so far in among the rails.

At last a bright idea struck Johnny. He said he would build a nice house for them.

"You can't," said Rosy.

"I can too," said Johnny. "'T won't

be a house such as folks live in, but it 'll do for cats."

"Will it be as nice as a dog's house, Johnny?" asked Rosy.

"Nicer," said Johnny; "that is, it 'll be prettier. 'Twon't be so close. Cats don't need it so close; but it 'll be prettier. It 's going to have flags on it."

"Flags! O Johnny!" exclaimed Rosy. "That 'll be splendid; but we have n't got any flags."

"I know where I can get as many as I want," said Johnny,—"down to the club-room. They give flags to boys there."

"What for, Johnny?" asked Rosy.

“Oh, just to carry,” replied Johnny proudly. “They like to have boys carrying their flags round.”

“Do you suppose they’ll like to have them on a cat’s house?” asked Rosy.

“Why not?” said Johnny; and Rosy did not know what to say.

Very hard Johnny worked on the house; and it was a queer-looking house when it was done, but it was the only one I ever heard of that was built on purpose for cats. It was about eight feet square; the central support of it was an old saw-horse turned up endwise, with a mason’s trestle on top; the roof was made of

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old rails, and had two slopes to it, like real houses' roofs; the sides were uneven, because on one side the rails rested on an old pig-trough, and on the other on a wooden trestle which was higher than the trough. This unevenness troubled Johnny, but it really made the house prettier. The space under this roof was divided by rows of small stakes into three compartments,— one large one for Mammy Tittleback and her six youngest kittens; Mousiewary and her two kittens in another smaller room; and the adopted kittens and Juniper in a third. I have n't told you yet about the adopted kittens, but I

will presently. These three rooms had each a tin pan set in the middle, and fixed firm in its place by small stakes driven into the ground around it. Johnny was determined to teach the cats to keep in their own rooms, and that each family must eat by itself. It was n't so hard to bring this about as you would have supposed, because Johnny and Rosy spent nearly all their time with the cats, and every time any cat or kitten stepped over the little wall of stakes into the apartment of another family, it was very gently lifted up and put back again into its own room, and stroked and told in gentle voice,—

“Stay in your own room, kitty.”

And at meal-times there was very little trouble, after the first few days, with anybody but Juniper. All the rest learned very soon which milk-pan belonged to them, and would run straight to it, as soon as Johnny called them. But Juniper was an independent cat; and he persisted in walking about from room to room, pretty much as he pleased. You see he was the only unemployed cat in the set. Mammy Tittleback had her hands full,—I suppose you ought to say paws full when you are speaking of cats,—with six kittens of her own and two adopted ones; and Mousie-

wary was just as busy with her two kittens as if she had had ten; but Juniper had nobody to look after except himself. He was a lazy cat too. He always used to walk slowly to his meals. The rest would all be running and jumping in their hurry to get to the house when Johnny and Rosy called them; but Juniper would come marching along as slowly as if he were in no sort of hurry, in fact, as if he did n't care whether he had anything to eat or not. But once he got to the pan he would drink fully his share, and more too.



## II.

Now I must tell you about the adopted kittens. They belonged to a wild cat who lived in the garden. Nobody knew anything about this cat. She was a kind of a beggar and thief cat, Johnny said. She would n't let you take care of her, or get near her ; and the only reason she took up her abode in the garden with her kittens was so as to be near the milk-house, and have a chance now and

then to steal milk out of the great kettles. One day the children found the poor thing dead in the chicken yard. What killed her there was nothing to show, but dead she was, and no mistake; so the children carried her away and buried her, and then went to look for her little kittens. There were four of them, and the poor little things were half dead from hunger. Their mother must have been dead some time before the children found her. They were too young to be fed, and the only chance for saving their lives was to get Mammy Tittleback to adopt them.

“She’s got an awful big family

now," said Phil, "but we might try her."

"She won't know but they're her own, if we don't let them all suck at once," said Johnny; "but it would n't be fair to cheat her that way."

"Won't know!" said Phil. "That's all you know about cats! She'll know they ain't hers as quick as she sees them."

It was a very droll sight to see Mammy Tittleback when the strange kittens were put down by her side. She was half asleep, and some of her own kittens had gone to sleep sucking their dinners; but the instant these poor famished little things were put

down by her, two of them began to suck as if they had never had anything to eat before, since they were born. Mammy Tittleback opened her eyes, and jumped up so quick she knocked all the kittens head over heels into a heap. Then she began smelling at kitten after kitten, and licking her own as she smelted them, till she came to the strangers, when she growled a little, and sniffed and sniffed; if cats could turn up their noses, she'd have turned up hers, but as she could n't she only growled and pushed them with her paw, and looked at them, all the time sniffing contemptuously. Johnny

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and Rosy were nearly ready to cry.

“Is she ‘dopting ‘em?” whispered Rosy.

“Keep still, can’t you!” said Phil; “don’t interrupt her. Let her do as she wants to.”

The children held their breaths and watched. It looked very discouraging. Mammy Tittleback walked round and round, looking much perplexed and not at all pleased. One minute she would stand still and stare at the pile of kittens, as if she did not know what to make of it; then she would fall to smelling and licking her own. At last, by mistake



"Mammy Tittleback walked round and round, looking much perplexed and not  
at all pleased." — PAGE 28.



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perhaps, she gave a little lick to one of the orphans.

“Oh, oh,” screamed Johnny, “she’s going to, she’s licked it;” at which Phil gave Johnny a great shake, and told him to be quiet or he’d spoil everything. Presently Mammy Titbleback lay down again and stretched herself out, and in less than a minute all six of her own kittens and the two strongest of the strangers were sucking away as hard as ever they could.

The children jumped for joy; but their joy was dampened by the sight of the other two feeble little kittens, who lay quite still and did not try to crowd in among the rest.

"Are they dead?" asked Rosy.

"No," said Johnny, picking them up, — "no; but I guess they will die pretty soon, they don't maow." And he laid them down very gently close in between Mammy Tittleback's hind legs.

"Well, they might as well," remarked Phil. "Eight kittens are enough. Mammy Tittleback can't bring up all the kittens in the town, you need n't think. She's a real old brick of a cat to take these two. I hope the others will die anyhow."

"O Phil," said Rosy, "could n't we find some other cat to 'dopt these two?" Rosy's tender heart ached

as hard at the thought of these motherless little kittens as if they had been a motherless little boy and girl.

"No," said Phil, "I don't know any other cat round here that's got kittens."

"But, Phil," persisted Rosy, "is n't there some cat that has n't got any kittens that would like some?"

Phil looked at Rosy for a minute without speaking, then he burst out laughing and said to Johnny, "Come on; what's the use talking?"

Then Rosy looked very much hurt, and ran into the house to ask her Aunt Mary if she did n't know of any cat that would adopt the two

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poor little kittens that Mammy Tittleback would n't take.

The next morning, when the children went out to visit their cats, the two feeble little kittens were dead, so that put an end to all trouble on that score, and left only thirteen cats for the children to take care of.

It is wonderful how fast young cats grow. It seemed only a few days before all eight of these little kittens were big enough to run around, and a very pretty sight it was to see them following Johnny and Rosy wherever they went.

Spitfire was Johnny's favorite from the beginning. He was a sharp, spry

fellow, not very good-natured to anybody but Johnny. Rosy was really afraid of him, even while he was little; but Johnny made him his chief pet, and told him everything that happened.

Mammy Tittleback had divided her own colors among her kittens very oddly. "Spitfire" was all yellow and white; "Coaley" was black as a coal, and that was why he was called "Coaley." "Blacky" was black and white; "Limbab," white with gray spots; "Gregory Second," gray with white spots; and "Lily" was as white as snow, for which reason she got her pretty name. Rosy wanted her called

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“White Lily,” but the boys thought it too long. Where there were so many cats, they said, none of the names ought to be more than two syllables long, if you could help it. “Gregory” had to be called “Gregory Second,” because there was another Gregory already, an old cat over at Grandma Jameson’s, and it was for him that this kitten was named; and “Tottontail” had to be called “Tottontail,” because he was all over gray, with just a little bit of white at the tip of his tail, like a cottontail rabbit. And his brother was exactly like him, only a little bit less white on his tail, so it seemed best to call him “Tot-

tontail's Brother;" and he had such a funny way of putting his ears back, it made him look like an old man; so sometimes they could not help calling him "Grandfather." Altogether there seemed to be a very good reason for every name in the whole family, and I think there was just as good a reason for calling "Lily" "White Lily." However, as Phil said, "anybody could see she was white; and nobody ever heard of a black lily anyhow, and it saved time to say just 'Lily.'"





### III.

MR. FRANK WELLINGTON's house was an old-fashioned square wooden house, with a wide hall running straight through it from front to back; at the back was a broad piazza with a railing around it, and steps leading down into the back yard. Grape-vines grew on the sides of this piazza, and a splendid great polonia-tree, which had heart-shaped leaves as big as dinner-plates, grew close





"Rosy Chapman running among the Verbena beds, and half a dozen kittens racing after her." — PAGE 37.

enough to it to shade it. This was where Mrs. Wellington used to sit with her sewing on summer afternoons; and she often thought that there could n't be a prettier sight in all the world than Rosy Chapman running among the verbena beds with her long yellow curls flying behind, her little bare white feet glancing up and down among the bright blossoms, and half a dozen kittens racing after her. Rosy loved to race with them better than anything else; though sometimes she would sit down in her little rocking-chair, holding her lap full of them, and rocking them to sleep. But Johnny made a

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more serious business of it. Johnny wanted to teach them. He had read about learned pigs and trained fleas, and he was sure these kittens were a great deal brighter than either pigs or fleas could possibly be; so what do you think Johnny did? He printed the alphabet in large letters on a sheet of white pasteboard, nailed it up on the inside of the largest room in the cats' house, and spent hours and hours reading the letters over to the kittens. He had a scheme of putting the letters on separate square bits of pasteboard or paper pasted on wood, and teaching the kittens to pick them out; but before he did

that, he wanted to be sure that they knew them by sight on the paper he had nailed up, and he never became sure enough of that to go on any farther in his teaching. In fact, he never got any farther than to succeed in keeping them still for a few minutes while he read the letters aloud. The cat that kept still the longest, he said, was the best scholar that day ; he put their names down in a little book, and gave them good and bad marks according as they behaved, just as he and Rosy used to get marks in school.

After Johnny got all his flags up, the cats' house looked very pretty. It had four flags on it ; one was a

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big one with the stars and stripes, and "Our Republic" in big letters on it; one was a "Garfield and Arthur" flag, which had been given to Johnny by the Garfield Club in Mendon; underneath this was a small white one Johnny made himself, with "Hurrah for Both" on it in rather uneven letters; then at two of the corners of the house were small red, white, and blue flags of the common sort. But the glory of all was a big flag on a flagstaff twenty feet high, which Uncle Frank put up for the boys. This also was a "Garfield and Arthur" flag, and a very fine one it was too. The kit-

tens used to look up longingly at all these bright flags blowing in the wind above their house ; but Johnny had taken care to put them high enough to be beyond their reach even when they climbed up to the ridge-pole. They would have made tatters of them all in five seconds if they could have ever got their claws into them.

As soon as the kittens were big enough to enjoy playing with a mouse, or, perhaps, taking a bite of one, Mammy Tittleback returned to her old habits of mouse-catching. There had never been such a mouser as she on the farm. It is really true that

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she had several times been known to catch six mice in five minutes by Mr. Frank Wellington's watch; and once she did a thing even more wonderful than that. This Phil described to me himself; and Phil is one of the most exact and truthful boys, and never makes any story out bigger than it is.

The place where they used to have the best fun seeing Mammy Tittleback catch mice was in the cornhouse. The floor of the cornhouse was half covered with cobs from which the corn had been shelled; in one corner these were piled up half as high as the wall. The mice

used to hide among these, and in the cracks in the walls; the boys would take long sticks, push the cobs about, and roll them from side to side. This would frighten the mice and make them run out. Mammy Tittleback stood in the middle of the floor ready to spring for them the minute they appeared. One day the boys were doing this, and two mice ran out almost at the same minute and the same way. Mammy Tittleback caught the first one in her mouth; they thought she would lose the second one. Not a bit of it. Quick as a flash she pounced on that one

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too, and, without letting go of the one she already had in her teeth, she actually caught the second one! Two live mice at once in her mouth! They were not alive many seconds, though; one craunch of Mammy Tittleback's teeth killed them both, and she dropped them on the floor, and was all ready to catch the next ones. Did anybody ever hear of such a mouser as that?

Another story also Phil told me about the kittens which I should have found it hard to believe if I had read it in a book ; but which I know must be true, because Phil told it. One day, after the kittens had grown so big

that they used to go everywhere, the children went off for a long walk in the fields, and four of the kittens went with them. When the children climbed fences the kittens crawled through, and they had no trouble till they came to a brook. The children just tucked up their trousers and waded through, first putting the kittens all down together in a hollow at the roots of a tree, and telling them to stay still there till they came back. They hadn't gone many steps on the other side when they heard first one splash, then two, then three; and, looking round, what should they see but three of those little kittens swim-

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ming for dear life across the brook, their poor little noses hardly above the water? It was as much as ever they got across; but they did, and scrambled out on the other side looking like drowned rats. These were Spitfire and Gregory Second and Blacky; Tottontail was the fourth. He did not appear, and he was not to be seen, either, where they had put him down on the other side. At last they spied him racing up stream as hard as he could go. He ran till he came to a place where the brook was only a little thread of water in the grass, and there he very sensibly stepped across; the only one of the



The kittens swimming for dear life across the brook.— PAGE 46.



whole party, cats or children, who got over without wet feet. Now who can help believing that Tottontail thought it all out in his head, just as a boy or a girl would who had never learned to swim? It was very wonderful that Spitfire and Gregory and Blacky should have plunged in to swim across, when they had never done such a thing before in all their lives, and of course must have hated the very touch of water, as all cats do; but I think it was still more wonderful in Tottontail to have reasoned that if he ran along the stream for a little distance, he might possibly come to a place where he could get

over by an easier way than swimming, and without wetting his feet.

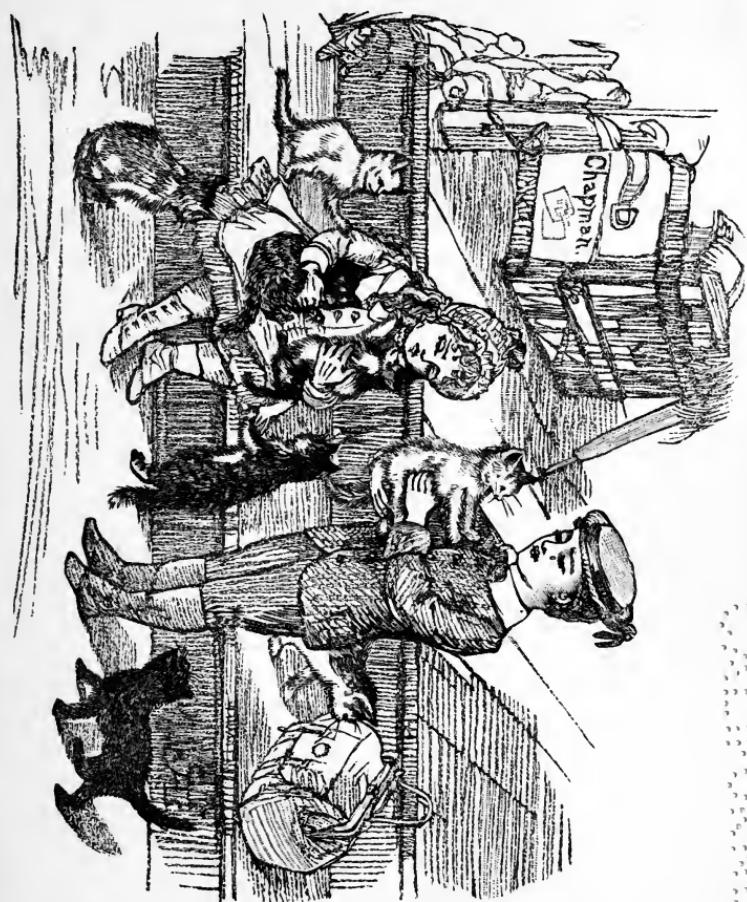
The summer was gone before the children felt as if it had fairly begun. Each of them had had a flower-bed of his own, and ever so many of the flowers had gone to seed before the children had finished their first weeding. The little cats had enjoyed the gardens as much as the children had. When the beds were first planted, and the green plants were just peeping up, the kittens were very often scolded, and sometimes had their ears gently boxed, to keep them from walking on the beds; but by August, when the weeds and the flowers were all

up high and strong together, they raced in and out among them as much as they pleased, and had fine frolics under the poppies and climbing hollyhock stems.

When the time of Johnny's and Rosy's visit drew near its end, Johnny felt very sad at the thought of leaving his kittens. They were "just at the prettiest age," he said; "just beginning to be some comfort," after all the pains he had taken to train them; and he was very much afraid they would not be so well taken care of after he had gone. Fred was going away to school for the winter, and Phil, he thought,

would never have patience to feed thirteen cats each day. However, he did all that he could to make them comfortable for the winter. He boarded up the sides of their house snug and warm, so that they need not suffer from cold; and he made his Aunt Mary promise to give them plenty of milk twice a day. Then, when the time came, he bade them all good-by one by one, and had a long farewell talk with his favorite Spitfire. Rosy, too, felt very sad at leaving them, but not so sad as Johnny.

Johnny and Rosy and their mother were to spend the winter at their



"Johnny and Rosy bade them goodby, one by one." — PAGE 50.



Grandma Jameson's, in the town of Burnet, only twelve miles from Mendon, and Johnny said to Spitfire,—

“It is n't as if we were going so far off, we could n't ever come to see you. We 'll be back some day before Christmas.”

“Maow,” said Spitfire.

“I 'm perfectly sure he understands all I say,” said Johnny. “Don't you, Spitfire?”

“Maow, maow,” replied Spitfire.

“There!” said Johnny triumphantly; “I knew he did.”

It was the middle of October when Johnny and Rosy left their Aunt

Mary's and went to Grandma Jameson's. Much to their delight, they found four cats there.

"A good deal better than none," said Johnny.

"Yes," said Rosy, "but they're all old. They won't play tag. They're real old cats."

"Anyhow, they're better than none," replied Johnny resolutely. "They're good to hold, and Snowball's a splendid mouser."

These cats' names were "Snowball," "Lappit," "Stonepile," and "Gregory." This was the old "Gregory" after whom the kitten "Gregory Second" over at Mendon had been

named. "Gregory" had been in the Jameson family a good many years.





## IV.

THERE was another character who had been in the Jameson family a good many years, about whom I must tell you, because he will come in presently in connection with this history of the cats. In fact, he has more to do with the next part of the history than even Johnny and Rosy have. This is an old colored man who takes care of Grandma Jameson's farm for her. He is as good

an old man as "Uncle Tom" was, in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and I'm sure he must be as black. He lives in a little house in a grove of chestnut and oak trees, just across the meadow from Grandma Jameson's; and, summer and winter, rain or shine, he is to be seen every morning at daylight coming up the lane ready for his day's work. His name is Jerry; he is well known all over Burnet, and he is one of the old men that nobody ever passes by without speaking. "Hullo, Jerry!" "How de do, Jerry?" "Is that you, Jerry?" are to be heard on all sides as Jerry goes through the street.

There is a mule, too, that Jerry drives, which is almost as well known as Jerry. There is a horse also on the farm; but the horse is so fat he can't go as fast as the mule does. So the mule and the horse have gradually changed places in their duties; the horse does the farm work and the mule goes to town on errands; and there is no more familiar sight in all the town of Burnet than the Jameson Rockaway drawn by the mule Nelly, with old Jerry sitting sidewise on the low front seat, driving. There isn't a week in the year that Jerry does n't go down to the railway station at least once, and sometimes sev-

eral times, in this way, to bring some of Grandma Jameson's children or grandchildren or nieces or nephews or friends to come and make her a visit. Her house is one of the houses that never seems to be so full it can't hold more. You know there are some such houses; the more people come, the merrier, and there is always room made somehow for everybody to sleep at night.

You would n't think to look at the house that it could hold many people; it is not large. In truth, I cannot myself imagine, often as I have stayed in the dear old place, where all the people have slept when I have

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known twelve or more to come down to breakfast of a morning, all looking as if they had had a capital night's rest. Jerry is always glad as anybody in the house when visitors come; yet it makes him no end of work, carrying them and their luggage back and forth to town, with all the rest of the errands he has to do. Nelly is pretty old, and the Rockaway is small, and many a time Jerry has to make two trips to get one party of people up to the house, with all that belongs to them in the way of trunks and bags and bundles; but he likes it. He pulls off his old drab felt hat, and bows, and holds out both hands, and

everybody who comes shakes hands with Jerry, first of all, at the station.

One day, late in last October, Jerry was at the post-office waiting for the mail; when it came in, there was a postal card from Mendon for Mrs. Jameson, and as the postmistress is Mrs. Jameson's own niece, she thought she would look at the message on the card, and see if all were well at Mr. Frank Wellington's. This was what she found written on the card,—

“Meet company at the three o'clock train.”

That was the train which had just come in and brought the mail.

"Oh, dear!" said she. "Jerry, it is well I looked at this card. It is from Mr. Wellington, and he says there will be company down by the three o'clock train, to go to Grandma's. You must turn round and go right to the station; they will be waiting, and wondering why nobody's there to meet them."

"That's a fact," said Jerry; "they've done sure, wonderin' by this time; 'spect they've walked up; but I'll go down 'n' see."

So Jerry made as quick time as he could coax out of the mule, down to the railway station. The train had been gone more than half an hour,

and the station was quiet and deserted by all except the station-master, who was waiting for the up-train, which would be along in an hour.

" Been anybody here to go up to our house ? " asked Jerry. " We got a postal, sayin' there'd be company down on the three o'clock."

" Well," replied the station-master, looking curiously at Jerry, " there was some company came on that train for your folks."

" What became on 'em ? " said Jerry. " Hev they walked ? "

" Well, no ; they hain't walked ; they're in the Freight Depot," said the man rather shortly.

Jerry thought this was the queerest thing he ever heard of.

"In the Freight Depot!" exclaimed he. "What'd they go there for? Who be they?"

"You'll find 'em there," replied the man, and turned on his heel.

Still more bewildered, Jerry hurried to the Freight Depot, which was on the opposite side of the railroad track, a little farther down. Now I am wondering if any of you children will guess who the "company" were that had come from Mendon by the three o'clock train to go to Grandma Jameson's. It makes me laugh so to think of it, that I can hardly write

the words. I don't believe I shall ever get to be so old that it won't make me laugh to think about this batch of visitors to Grandma Jameson's.

It was nothing more nor less than all Johnny Chapman's cats! Yes, all of them,— Mammy Tittleback, Juniper, Mousiewary, Spitfire, Blacky, Coaley, Limbab, Lily, Gregory Second, Tottontail, Tottontail's Brother, Beauty, Clover. There they all were, large as life, and maowing enough to make you deaf. Poor things! it was n't that they were uncomfortable, for they were in a very large box, with three sides made of slats, so they had

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plenty of room and plenty of air ; but of course they were frightened almost to death. The box was addressed in very large letters to

CAPTAIN JOHNNY CHAPMAN

AND

FIRST LIEUTENANT ROSE CHAPMAN.

Above this was printed in still bigger letters,

THE GARFIELD CLUB.

Some of the men who were at the station when the box came, were made very angry by this. They did not know anything about the history of the cats ; and of course they could not

see that the thing had any meaning at all, except as an insult to the Garfield Club in Burnet. It was just before Election, you see, and at that time all men in the United States are so excited they become very touchy on the subject of politics ; and all the Garfield men who saw this great box of mewing cats labelled the "Garfield Club" thought the thing had been done by some Democrat to play off a joke on the Republicans. So they went to a paint-shop, and got some black paint, and painted, on the other side of the box, "Hancock Serenaders." That was the only thing they could think of to pay off the Demo-

crats whom they suspected of the joke.

Jerry knew what it meant as soon as he saw the box. He had heard from Johnny and Rosy all about their wonderful cats over at Uncle Frank's, and how terribly they missed them; but it had never crossed anybody's mind that Uncle Frank would send them after the children. Poor Jerry did n't much like the prospect of his ride from the station to the house; however, he put the box into the Rockaway, got home with it as quickly as possible, and took it immediately to the barn.

Then he went into the house with

the mail, as if nothing had happened. Jerry was something of a wag in his way, as well as Mr. Frank Wellington; so he handed the letters to Mrs. Chapman without a word, and stood waiting while she looked them over. As soon as she read the postal she exclaimed,—

“Oh, Jerry, this is too bad. There’s company down at the station; came by the three o’clock train. You’ll have to go right back and get them. I wonder who it can be.”

“They’ve come, ma’am,” said Jerry quietly.

“Come!” exclaimed Mrs. Chapman; “come? Why, where are

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they?" and she ran out on the piazza. Jerry stopped her, and coming nearer said, in a low, mysterious tone,—

"They're in the barn, ma'am!"

"Jerry! In the barn! What do you mean?" exclaimed Mrs. Chapman. And she looked so puzzled and frightened that Jerry could not keep it up any longer.

"It's the cats, ma'am," he said; "them cats of Johnny's from Mr. Wellington's: all of 'em. The men to the station said there was forty; but I don't think there's more 'n twenty; mebbe not so many's that; they're rowin' round so, you can't count 'em very well."

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" said Mrs. Chapman. "What won't Frank Wellington do next!" Then she found her mother, and told her, and they both went out to the barn to look at the cats. Jerry lifted up one of the slats so that he could put in a pail of milk for them; and as soon as they saw friendly faces, and heard gentle voices, and saw the milk, they calmed down a little, but they were still terribly frightened. Grandma Jameson could not help laughing, but she was not at all pleased.

"I think Frank Wellington might have been in better business," she said. "We do not want any more

cats here ; the winter is coming, when they must be housed. What is to be done with the poor beasts ? ”

“ Oh, we ’ll give most of them away, mother,” said Mrs. Chapman. “ They ’re all splendid kittens ; anybody ’ll be glad of them.”

“ I do not think thee will find any dearth of cats in the village ; it seems to be something most families are supplied with : but thee can do what thee likes with them ; they can’t be kept here, that is certain,” replied Mrs. Jameson placidly, and went into the house.

Mrs. Chapman and Jerry decided that the cats should be left in the box

till morning, and the children should not be told until then of their arrival.

When Mrs. Chapman was putting Johnny and Rosy to bed, she said,—

“Johnny, if Uncle Frank should send your cats over here, you would have to make up your mind to give some of them away. You know, Grandma could n’t keep them all !”

“What makes you think he ’ll send them over ?” cried Johnny. “He did n’t say he would.”

“No,” replied Mrs. Chapman, “I know he did n’t; but I think it is very likely he found them more trouble, after you went away, than he thought they would be.”

"I got them fixed real comfortable for the winter," said Johnny. "Their house is all boarded up, so 't will be warm; but I'd give anything to have them here. There's plenty of room in the barn. They need n't even come into the house."

It took a good deal of reasoning and persuading to bring Johnny to consent to the giving away of any of his beloved cats, in case they were sent over from Mendon; but at last he did, and he and Rosy fell asleep while they were trying to decide which ones they would keep, and which ones they would give away, in case they had to make the choice.



## V.

IN the morning, after breakfast, the news was told them, that the cats had arrived the night before and were in the barn. Almost before the words were out of their mother's mouth they were off like lightning to see them. Jerry was on hand ready to open the box, and the whole family gathered to see the prisoners set free. What a scene it was! As soon as the slats were broken enough to give room,

out the cats sprang, like wild creatures, heads over heels, heels over heads, the whole thirteen in one tumbling mass. They ran in all directions as fast as they could run, poor Rosy and Johnny in vain trying to catch so much as one of them.

"They're crazy like," said Jerry; "they've been scared enough to kill 'em; but they'll come back fast enough. Ye need n't be afeard," he added kindly to Johnny, who was ready to burst out crying, to see even his beloved Spitfire darting away like a strange wildcat of the woods. Sure enough, very soon the little ones began to stick their heads out from

behind beams and out of corners, and to take cautious steps towards Johnny, whose dear voice they recognized as he kept saying, pityingly,—

“Poor kitties, poor kitties, come here to me; poor kitties, don’t you know me?” In a few minutes he had Spitfire in his arms, and Rosy had Blacky, the one she had always loved best. Mammy Tittleback, Juniper, and Mousiewary had escaped out of the barn, and disappeared in the woods along the mill-race. They were much more frightened than the kittens, and had reason to be, for they knew very well that it was an extraordinary thing which had happened to

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them, whereas the little ones did not know but it often happened to cats to be packed up in boxes and take journeys in railway trains, and now that they saw Johnny and Rosy, they thought everything was all right.

In the mean time the cats of the house, Snowball, Gregory, Stonepile, and Lappit, hearing the commotion and caterwauling in the barn, had come out to see what was going on. On the threshold they all stopped, stock still, set up their backs, and began to growl. The little kittens began to sneak off again towards hiding-places. Snowball came for-

ward, and looked as if she would make fight, but Johnny drove her back, and said very sharply, "Scat! scat! we don't want you here." On hearing these words, Gregory and the others turned round and walked scornfully away, as if they would not take any more notice of such young cats; but Snowball was very angry, and continued to hang about the barn, every now and then looking in, and growling, and swelling up her tail, and she never would, to the last, make friends with one of the new-comers.

Release had come too late for poor Gregory Second and Lily. They had never been strong as the others, and

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the fright of the journey was too much for them. Early on the morning after their arrival, Gregory Second was found dead in the barn. The children gave him a grand funeral, and buried him in the meadow behind the house. There were staying now at Mrs. Jameson's two other grandchildren of hers, Johnny and Katy Wells; and the two Johnnies and Katy and Rosy went out, in a solemn procession, into the field to bury Gregory. Each child carried a cat in its arms, and the rest of the cats followed on, and stood still, very serious, while Gregory was laid in the ground. The boys filled up the grave,



"The children gave him a grand funeral. Each carried a cat in its arms, and the rest of the cats followed on." — PAGE 78.



made a good-sized mound over it, and planted a little evergreen-tree at one end. They also set very firmly, on the top of the mound, what Johnny called "a kind of marble monument." It was the marble bottom of an old kerosene lamp. When this was all done, the children sang a hymn, which they had learned in their school.

#### THE OLD BLACK CAT.

WHO so full of fun and glee,  
Happy as a cat can be?  
Polished sides so nice and fat,  
Oh, how I love the old black cat!  
Poor kitty! O poor kitty!  
Sitting so cozy under the stove.

## CHORUS.

Pleasant, purring, pretty pussy,  
Frisky, full of fun and fussy ?

Mortal foe of mouse and rat,  
Oh, I love the old black cat !

Yes, I do !

Some will like the tortoise-shell ;  
Others love the white so well ;  
Let them choose of this or that,  
But give to me the old black cat.

Poor kitty ! O poor kitty !  
Sitting so cozy under the stove.

## CHORUS.

Pleasant, purring, pretty pussy, etc.

When the boys, to make her run,  
Call the dogs and set them on,  
Quickly I put on my hat,  
And fly to save the old black cat.

Poor kitty ! O poor kitty !  
Sitting so cozy under the stove.

## CHORUS.

Pleasant, purring, pretty pussy, etc.

This song had come to Burnet years before, in a magazine. There was no other printed copy of the song; but, year after year, the Burnet children had sung it at school, and every child in town knew it by heart.

It cannot be said to be exactly a funeral hymn, and Gregory was a gray cat and not a black one, which made it still less appropriate; but it was the only song they knew about cats, so they sang it slow, and made it do.

Just as they were finishing it a big dog came darting down from the other side of the mill-race, leaped over the race, barking loud, and sprang in among them.

This gave the relatives a great scare. All those that were standing on the ground scrambled up the nearest trees as fast as they could; and even those that were being held in the children's arms scratched and fought to get down, that they might run away too. So the funeral ended very suddenly in great disorder, and with altogether more laughing than seemed proper at a funeral.

The next day Lily died and was

buried by the side of Gregory, but with less ceremony than had been used the day before. Over her grave was put a high glass monument, which made much more show than the one of marble on Gregory's grave. That was only a flat slab, which lay on the grass; but Lily's was a glass lamp which had by some accident got a little broken. This, set bottom side up, pressed down firmly into the earth, made a fine show, and could be seen a good way off, "the way a monument ought to be," Johnny said; and he searched diligently to find something equally high and imposing for Gregory's grave, but could not find it.

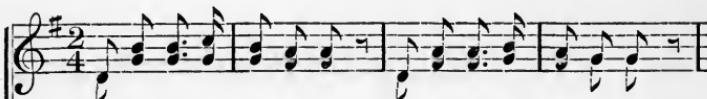
In the course of a few days the remaining kittens and cats were all given away, except Mammy Tittleback and Blacky. They were selected as being on the whole the best ones to keep. Mammy Tittleback is so good a mouser that she would be a useful member of any family, and Blacky bids fair to grow up as good a mouser as she. What became of Juniper and Mousiewary was never known. They were seen now and then in the neighborhood of the house, but never stayed long, and finally disappeared altogether.

Mammy Tittleback, I am sorry to say, did not take the loss of her fam-

ily in the least to heart ; after the first week or two she seemed as contented and as much at home in her new quarters as if she had lived there all her life. What she has thought about it all, there is no knowing ; but as she and Blacky lie asleep under the stove, of an evening, you'd never suspect, to look at them, that they had had such a fine summer house to live in last year, or had ever belonged to a "Garfield Club," and taken a railway journey.

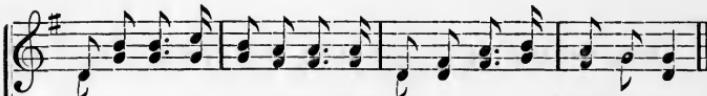


## THE OLD BLACK CAT.



1. Who so full of fun and glee,  
2. Some will like the tortoise shell,  
3. When the boys, to make her run,

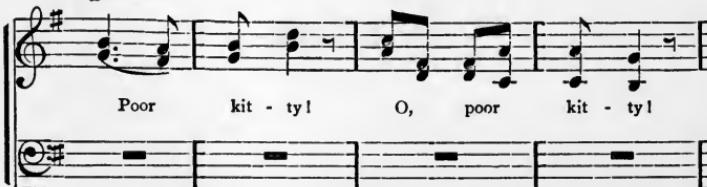
Hap - py as a cat can be?  
Others love the white so well;  
Call the dogs and set them on,



Polished sides so nice and fat—Oh, how I love the old black cat.  
Let them choose of this or that, But give to me the old black cat.  
Quickly I put on my hat And fly to save the old black cat.



*Affetuoso.*

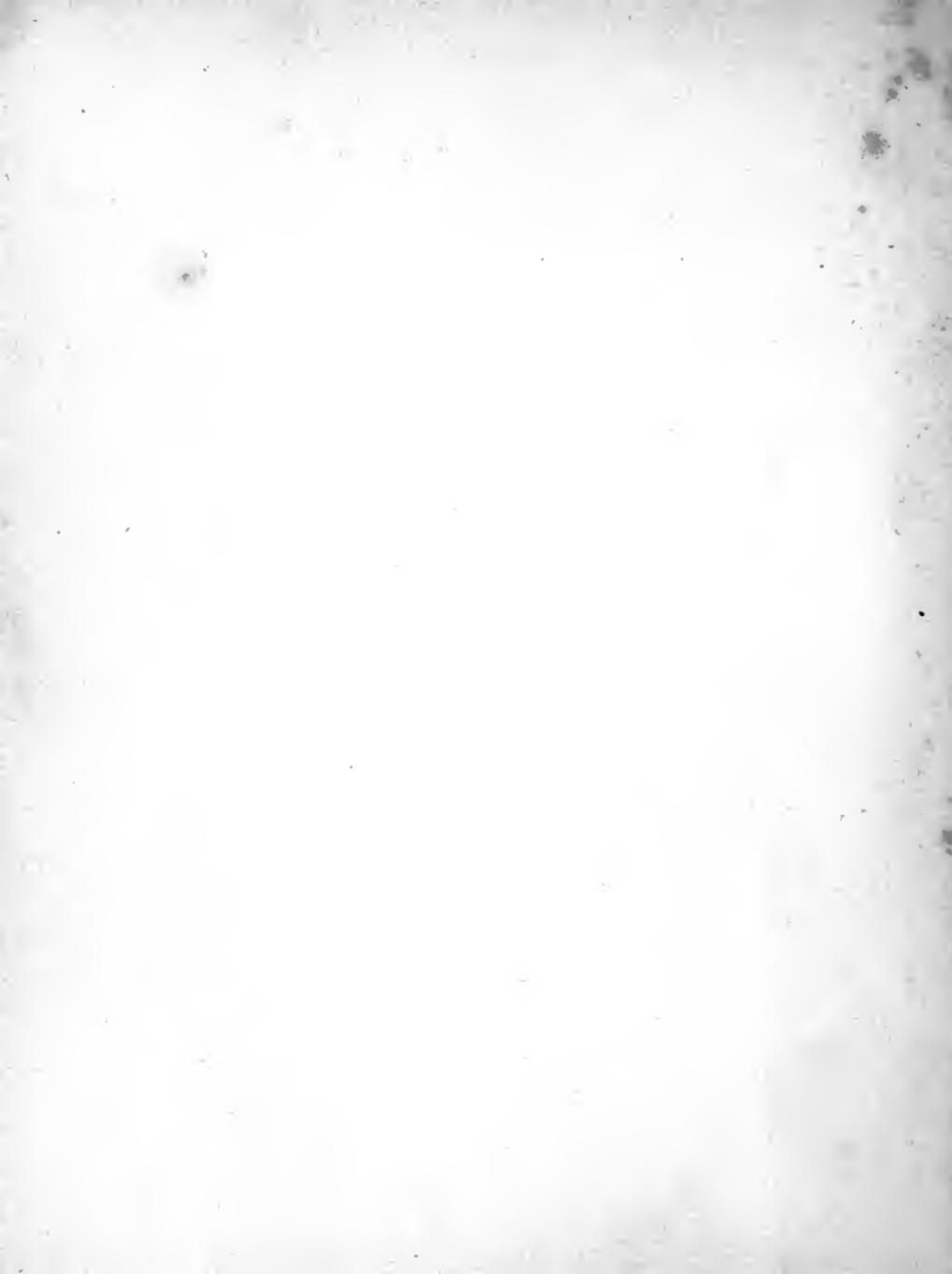


Sit - ting so co - zy un - der the stove.

Pleasant, purring, pretty pussy, Frisky, full of fun and fussy, Mortal foe of

mouse and rat, O, I love the old black cat. Yes, I do.

[From the "Schoolday Magazine," March, 1873.]





## P R E F A C E.

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THIS story of Mammy Tittleback and her family was told to me last winter, at Christmas time, in Grandma Jameson's house, by Johnny and Rosy Chapman and their mother, and by Phil Wellington and his mother, and by Johnny and Katy Wells, and by Grandma Jameson herself, and by "Aunt Maggie" Jameson, Grandma Jameson's daughter, and by "Aunt Hannah," Grandma Jameson's sister, and by "Cousin Fanny," the postmistress who had the first

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sight of the postal card, and by Jerry, who had the worst of the whole business, bringing the box of cats from the railway-station up to the house.

I don't mean that each of these persons told me the whole story from beginning to end. I was not at Grandma Jameson's long enough for that; I was there only Christmas day and the day after. But I mean that all these people told me parts of the story, and every time the subject was mentioned somebody would remember something new about it, and the longer we talked about it the more funny things kept coming up to the very last, and I don't doubt that when I go there again next summer, Phil and Johnny will begin where they left off and

tell me still more things as droll as these. The story about the little kittens swimming over the brook I did not hear until the morning I was coming away. Just as I was busy packing Phil came running up to my room, saying, "There's one more thing we forgot the cats did," and then he told me the story of the swimming. Then I said, "Tell me some more, Phil; I don't believe you've told me half yet."

"Well," he said, "you see, they were doing things all the time, and we didn't think much about 'em. That's the reason we can't remember," which remark of Phil's has a good lesson in it when you come to look at it closely. It would make a good text for a little sermon to preach to children

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that very often have to say, "I forgot," about something they ought to have done.

Things that we think very much about we never forget, any more than we do persons that we love very dearly and think very much of. So "I forgot" is not very much of an excuse for not having done a thing; it is only another way of saying "I didn't attend to it enough to make it stay in my mind," or, "I didn't care enough about it to remember it."

I heard the greater part of this story on Christmas night. Johnny and Rosy and Phil and Katy had a great frolic telling it. In the midst of it Johnny exclaimed, "Don't you want to see Mammy Tittleback?"

"Indeed I do," I replied. So he ran out

to the barn and brought her in in his arms. Snowball was already there. She was lying on the hearth when Mammy Tittleback was brought in, and I began to praise her, saying what a beauty she was, and how handsome the yellow, black, and white colors in her fur were. Snowball got up, and began to walk about uneasily and to rub up against us, as if she wanted to be noticed also.

"Snowball's a nice cat too," said Phil, picking her up, "'most as good as Mammy Tittleback."

"Blacky's the nicest," said Rosy, who was rocking in her rocking-chair, and hugging Blacky up close to her face. "Blacky's the nicest of them all." Upon which everybody fell to telling what a tyrant Blacky had

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become ; how she would be held in somebody's lap all the time, and that even Aunt Hannah had had to give up to Blacky. Even Aunt Hannah, whom nobody in the house, not even Grandma Jameson herself, ever thinks of going against in the smallest thing, because she is such a beautiful and venerable old lady,—even Aunt Hannah had had to give up to Blacky.

Aunt Hannah is over eighty years old but she is never idle. She never has time to hold cats in her lap ; and, besides, I do not think she loves cats so well as the rest of her family do. As often as Blacky jumped up in her lap, Aunt Hannah would very gently set her on the floor ; but in five minutes Blacky would be up again. At last,

when she found Aunt Hannah really would not hold her in her lap, she took it in her head to lie in Aunt Hannah's work-basket, close by her side ; and just as often as Aunt Hannah put her out of her lap she would spring into the work-basket, and curl herself up like a little puff-ball of fur among the spools. This was even worse to Aunt Hannah than to have her on her knees, and she would take her out of the work-basket less gently than she lifted her out of her lap, and set her on the floor. Then Blacky would jump right up on her lap again, and so they had it,—Aunt Hannah and Blacky,—first lap, and then work-basket, till poor Aunt Hannah got as nearly out of patience as a lovely old lady of the Society of Friends

ever allows herself to be. She got so out of patience that she made a very nice, soft, round cushion stuffed with feathers, and kept it always at hand for Blacky to lie on. Then when Blacky jumped on her knees, she laid her on the cushion ; instantly Blacky would spring into the work-basket, and when she took her out of that, right up in her lap again. On that cushion she would not lie. At last Aunt Hannah was heard to say, "I believe it is of no use, I 'll have to give up to thee, little cat ;" and now Blacky lies in Aunt Hannah's work-basket whenever she feels like lying there instead of in Rosy's little chair or in somebody's lap ; and I dare say by the time I go to Burnet again, I shall find that Aunt Hannah has given up



"Now Blackie lies in Aunt Hannah's work-basket whenever she feels like lying there." — PAGE 96.



in the matter of the lap also, and is holding Blacky on her knees as many hours a day as anybody else in the house.

There was a great deal of discussion among the children as to the places where the little kittens were living now, and as to which ones were given away, and which ones had run away.

I suppose when Jerry had a half-dozen kittens to give away all at once, he could n't stop to select them very carefully, or to sort them out by name, or recollect where each one went.

"I know where Spitfire is," said Johnny ;  
"I saw him yesterday."

"Where ?" said Phil.

"I won't tell," said Johnny, "but I know."

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"Juniper, he ran away. He'll take care of himself. He used to come back once in a while. We'd see him round the barn. Mousiewary, she comes sometimes now; I saw her the other day. She's real smart."

"Well, old Mammy Tittleback's the best of 'em all," said Phil, catching her up and trying to make her snuggle down in his lap. But Mammy Tittleback did not like to be held. She wriggled away, jumped down, and walked restlessly toward the kitchen door. Phil followed, opened the door, and let her go out. "She won't let you pet her," he said; "she's a real business cat, she always was. She likes to stay in the barn and hunt rats better than anything in the world, except when it's so cold she can't."

"She used to let me hold her sometimes in the summer," said Rosy.

"Oh, that was different. She had to be staying round then, doing nothing, to look after the kittens," replied Phil. "She was n't wasting any time then being held, but she won't let you hold her now more 'n two or three minutes at a time. She jumps right down, and goes off as if she was sent for."

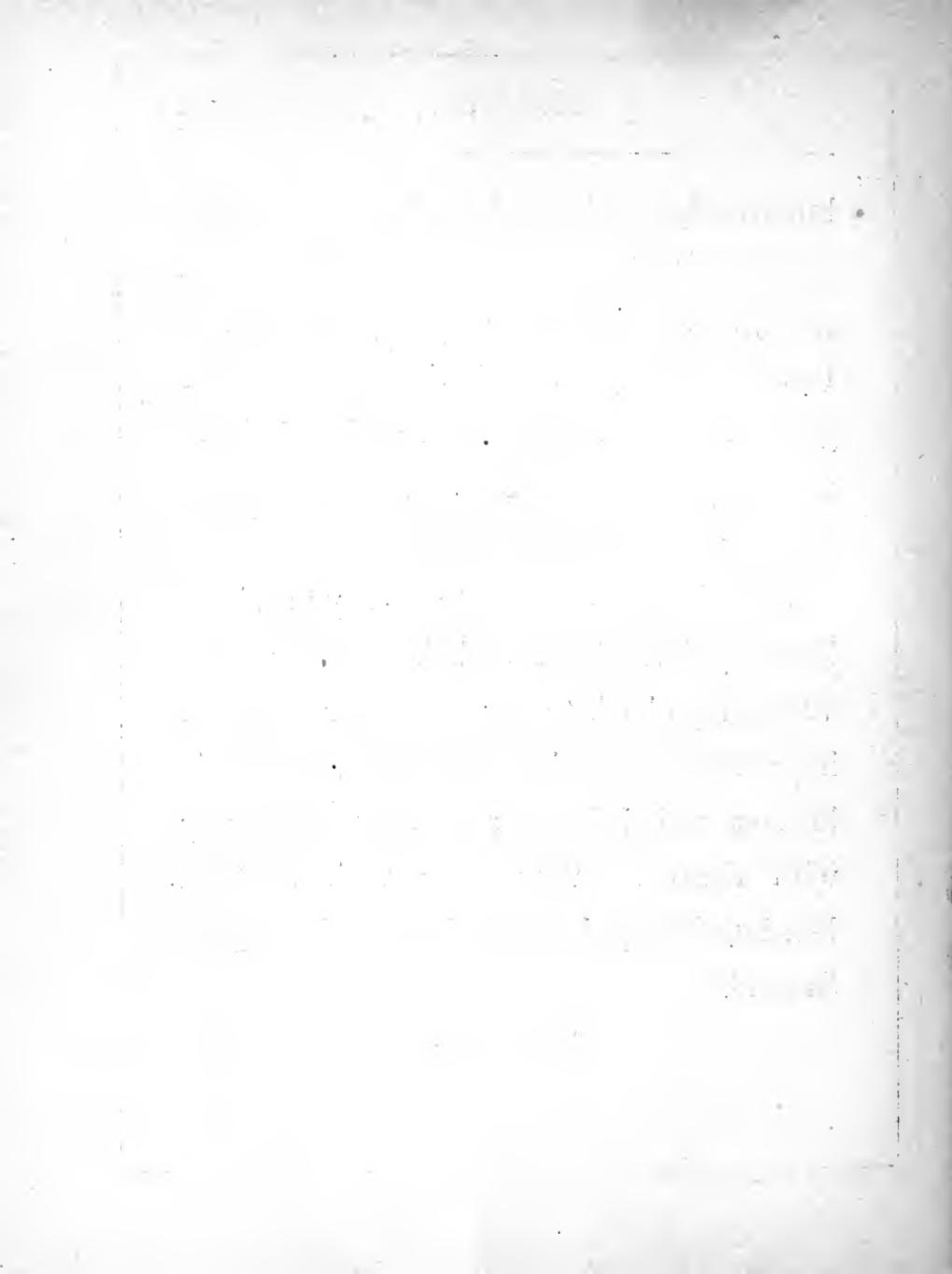
After the children had gone to bed, Mrs. Chapman told us a very droll part of the history of the cats' journey,—what might be called the sequel to it. The Democrats were not the only people in the village who took offence at the sight of the cats. There is a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty

to Animals in Burnet, and some of the people who belonged to this society, when they heard of the affair, took it into their heads that Mr. Frank Wellington had done a very cruel thing in shutting so many cats up in a box together. It was a very good illustration of the way stories grow big in many times telling, the way the number of those cats went on growing bigger and bigger every time the story was told. At last they got it up as high as forty-five; and there really were some people in town who believed that forty-five cats had come from Mendon to Burnet in that box. "Jerry says they haven't ever had it lower than twenty-five," said Mrs. Chapman. "It runs all the way from forty-five to twenty-five,

but twenty-five is the lowest, and there was one man in the town who really did threaten pretty seriously to enter a complaint against Frank Wellington with the society, but I guess he was laughed out of it. It is almost a pity he didn't do it, it would have been such a joke all round."

This is all I have to tell you about Mammy Tittleback and her family now. When I go back to Burnet next summer, I hope I shall find her with six more little kittens, and Johnny and Rosy as happy with them as they were with Spitfire, Blacky, Coaley, Limbab, Lily, and Gregory Second.

THE END.



THE HUNTER CATS  
OF  
CONNORLOA.



CONNORLOA.

THE  
HUNTER CATS  
OF  
CONNORLOA.

BY HELEN JACKSON  
(*H. H.*),

AUTHOR OF "LETTERS FROM A CAT," "MAMMY TITTLEBACK AND HER FAMILY," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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# THE HUNTER CATS OF CONNORLOA.

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## I.

ONCE on a time, there lived in California a gentleman whose name was Connor,— Mr. George Connor. He was an orphan, and had no brothers and only one sister. This sister was married to an Italian gentleman, one of the chamberlains to the King of Italy. She might almost as well have been dead, so far as her brother George's seeing her was concerned; for

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he, poor gentleman, was much too ill to cross the ocean to visit her; and her husband could not be spared from his duties as chamberlain to the King, to come with her to America, and she would not leave him and come alone. So at the time my story begins, it had been many years since the brother and sister had met, and Mr. Connor had quite made up his mind that he should never see her again in this world. He had had a sorry time of it for a good many years. He had wandered all over the world, trying to find a climate which would make him well. He had lived in Egypt, in Ceylon, in Italy, in Japan, in the Sandwich Islands, in the West India Islands. Every place that had

ever been heard of as being good for sick people, he had tried; for he had plenty of money, and there was nothing to prevent his journeying wherever he liked. He had a faithful black servant Jim, who went with him everywhere, and took the best of care of him; but neither the money, nor the good nursing, nor the sea air, nor the mountain air, nor the north, south, east or west air, did him any good. He only tired himself out for nothing, roaming from place to place; and was all the time lonely, and sad too, not having any home. So at last he made up his mind that he would roam no longer; that he would settle down, build himself a house, and if he could not be well and strong and do all the

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things he liked to, he would at least have a home, and have his books about him, and have a good bed to sleep in, and good food to eat, and be comfortable in all those ways in which no human being ever can be comfortable outside of his own house.

He happened to be in California when he took this resolution. He had been there for a winter; and on the whole had felt better there than he had felt anywhere else. The California sunshine did him more good than medicine: it is wonderful how the sun shines there! Then it was never either very hot or very cold in the part of California where he was; and that was a great advantage. He was in the southern part of the State, only thirty miles

from the sea-shore, in San Gabriel. You can find this name "San Gabriel" on your atlas, if you look very carefully. It is in small print, and on the Atlas it is not more than the width of a pin from the water's edge; but it really is thirty miles,—a good day's ride, and a beautiful day's ride too, from the sea. San Gabriel is a little village, only a dozen or two houses in it, and an old, half-ruined church,—a Catholic church, that was built there a hundred years ago, when the country was first settled by the Spaniards. They named all the places they settled, after saints; and the first thing they did in every place was to build a church, and get the Indians to come and be baptized, and learn to pray.

They did not call their settlements towns at first, only Missions; and they had at one time twenty-one of these Missions on the California coast, all the way up from San Diego to Monterey; and there were more than thirty thousand Indians in them, all being taught to pray and to work, and some of them to read and write. They were very good men, those first Spanish missionaries in California. There are still alive some Indians who recollect these times. They are very old, over a hundred years old; but they remember well about these things.

Most of the principal California towns of which you have read in your geographies were begun in this way. San Diego, Santa

Barbara, San Luis Obispo, San Rafael, San Francisco, Monterey, Los Angeles,—all of these were first settled by the missionaries, and by the soldiers and officers of the army who came to protect the missionaries against the savages. Los Angeles was named by them after the Virgin Mary. The Spanish name was very long, “*Nuestra Señora Reina de Los Angeles*,”—that means, “Our Lady the Queen of the Angels.” Of course this was quite too long to use every day; so it soon got cut down to simply “*Los Angeles*,” or “*The Angels*,”—a name which often amuses travellers in Los Angeles to-day, because the people who live there are not a bit more like angels than other people; and that, as we all know, is

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very unlike indeed. Near Los Angeles is San Gabriel, only about fifteen miles away. In the olden time, fifteen miles was not thought any distance at all; people were neighbors who lived only fifteen miles apart.

There are a great many interesting stories about the first settlement of San Gabriel, and the habits and customs of the Indians there. They were a very polite people to each other, and used to train their children in some respects very carefully. If a child were sent to bring water to an older person, and he tasted it on the way, he was made to throw the water out and go and bring fresh water; when two grown-up persons were talking together, if

a child ran between them he was told that he had done an uncivil thing, and would be punished if he did it again. These are only specimens of their rules for polite behavior. They seem to me as good as ours. These Indians were very fond of flowers, of which the whole country is in the spring so full, it looks in places like a garden bed ; of these flowers they used to make long garlands and wreaths, not only to wear on their heads, but to reach way down to their feet. These they wore at festivals and celebrations ; and sometimes at these festivals they used to have what they called “song contests.” Two of the best singers, or poets, would be matched together, to see which could sing the better, or make the

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better verses. That seems to me a more interesting kind of match than the spelling matches we have in our villages. But there is nothing of this sort to be seen in San Gabriel now, or indeed anywhere in California. The Indians, most of them, have been driven away by the white people who wanted their lands; year by year more and more white people have come, and the Indians have been robbed of more and more of their lands, and have died off by hundreds, until there are not many left.

Mr. Connor was much interested in learning all he could about them, and collecting all he could of the curious stone bowls and pestles they used to make, and of their baskets and lace work. He





INDIAN MAKING BOWLS.—Page 19.

spent much of his time riding about the country; and whenever he came to an Indian hut he would stop and talk with them, and ask if they had any stone bowls or baskets they would like to sell. The bowls especially were a great curiosity. Nobody knew how long ago they had been made. When the missionaries first came to the country, they found the Indians using them; they had them of all sizes, from those so large that they are almost more than a man can lift, down to tiny ones no bigger than a tea-cup. But big and little, they were all made in the same way out of solid stone, scooped out in the middle, by rubbing another stone round and round on them. You would think it would have taken a life-

time to make one; but they seem to have been plenty in the olden time. Even yet, people who are searching for such curiosities sometimes find big grave-mounds in which dozens of them are buried,—buried side by side with the people who used to eat out of them. There is nothing left of the people but their skulls and a few bones; but the bowls will last as long as the world stands.

Now I suppose you are beginning to wonder when I am coming to the Hunter Cats! I am coming to them just the way Mr. Connor did,—by degrees. I want you to know about the place he lived in, and how he used to amuse himself, before he

decided to build his house; and then I must tell you about the house, and then about the children that came to live with him in it, and then about the Chinamen that came to do his work, and about his orange-trees, and the gophers that gnawed the bark off them, and the rabbits that burrowed under his vines. Oh! it will be a good many pages yet before I can possibly get to the time when the Hunter Cats come in. But I will tell it as fast as I can, for I dislike long stories myself.

The village of San Gabriel is in a beautiful broad valley, running east and west. The north wall of the valley is made by a range of mountains, called the Sierra Madre; that is Spanish and means

"Mother Mountains." They are grand mountains; their tops are almost solid stone, all sharp and jagged, with more peaks and ridges, crowded in together, than you could possibly count. At the bottom, they reach out into the valley by long slopes, which in the olden time were covered thick with trees and shrubs; but now, the greater part of these have been cut down and cleared off, and the ground planted full of orange-trees and grape-vines. If you want to see how it looks to have solid miles upon miles of orange orchards and vineyards together, you must go to this San Gabriel Valley. There is no other such place in the world.

As Mr. Connor rode about, day after

day, and looked at these orchards and vineyards, he began to think he should like to have some too. So he went up and down along the base of the mountains, looking for a good place. At last he found one. It was strange nobody had picked it out before. One reason was that it was so wild, and lay so high up, that it would be a world of trouble, and cost a deal of money, to make a road up to it and to clear the ground. But Mr. Connor did not care for that. It was a sort of ridge of the mountains, and it was all grown over thick with what is called in California "chaparal." That is not the name of any one particular shrub or tree; it means a mixture of every sort and kind. You all know

what mixed candy is! Well, "chapparal" is mixed bushes and shrubs; mixed thick too! From a little way off, it looks as smooth as moss; it is so tangled, and the bushes have such strong and tough stems, you can't possibly get through it, unless you cut a path before you with a hatchet; it is a solid thicket all the way.

As Mr. Connor rode to and fro, in front of this green ridge, he thought how well a house would look up there, with the splendid mountain wall rising straight up behind it. And from the windows of such a house, one could look off, not only over the whole valley, but past the hills of its southern wall, clear and straight thirty miles to the sea. In a clear day, the line of

the water flashed and shone there like a silver thread.

Mr. Connor used to sit on his horse by the half hour at a time gazing at this hill-side, and picturing the home he would like to make there,— a big square house with plenty of room in it, wide verandas on all sides, and the slope in front of it one solid green orange orchard. The longer he looked the surer he felt that this was the thing he wanted to do.

The very day he decided, he bought the land; and in two days more he had a big force of men hacking away at the chapparal, burning it, digging up the tough, tangled roots; oh, what slow work it was! Just as soon as a big enough place was

cleared, he built a little house of rough boards,—only two rooms in it; and there he went to live, with Jim.

Now that he had once begun the making of his house, he could hardly wait for it to be done; and he was never happy except when he was overseeing the men, hurrying them and working himself. Many a tough old bush he chopped down with his own hands, and tugged the root up; and he grew stronger every day. This was a kind of medicine he had not tried before.

A great part of the bushes were “manzanita.” The roots and lower stems of this shrub are bright red, and twisted almost into knots. They make capital firewood; so Mr. Connor had them all

piled up in a pile to keep to burn in his big fireplaces; and you would have laughed to see such a wood-pile. It was almost as high as the house; and no two sticks alike,— all prongs and horns, and crooks and twists; they looked like monster's back teeth.

At last the house was done. It was a big, old-fashioned, square house, with a wide hall running through the middle; on the east side were the library and dining-room; on the west, the parlor and a big billiard-room; upstairs were four large bedrooms; at the back of the house, a kitchen. No servants were to sleep in the house. Mr. Connor would have only Chinamen for servants; and they would

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sleep, with the rest of his Chinamen laborers, in what he called the Chinese quarter,—a long, low wooden building still farther up on the hill. Only Jim was to sleep in the house with Mr. Connor.

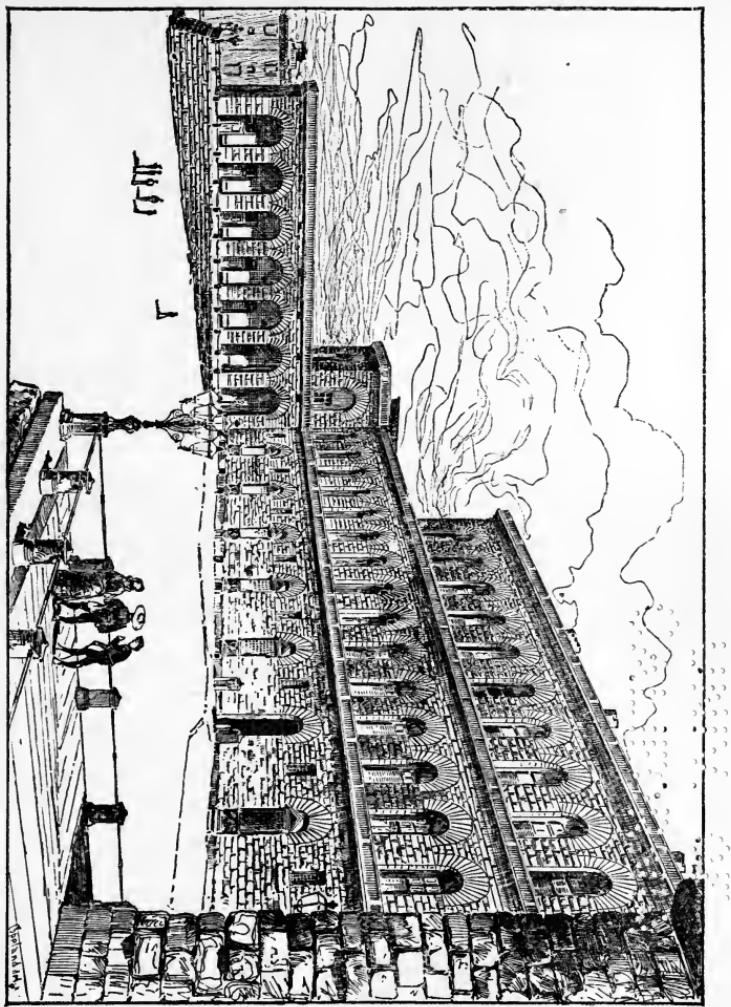
The Chinese quarter was a very comfortable house; and was presided over by a fat old Chinaman, who had such a long queue that Jim called him "Long Tail." His name was See Whong Choo, which, Jim said, was entirely too long to pronounce. There were twenty Chinamen on the place; and a funny sight it was to see them all file out of a morning to their work, every one with what looked like a great dinner-plate upside down on his head for a hat, and his long, black hair

braided in a queue, not much bigger than a rat tail, hanging down his back.

People in California are so used to seeing Chinamen, that they do not realize how droll they look to persons not accustomed to the sight.

Their yellow skins, their funny little black eyes, set so slanting in their heads that you can't tell half the time whether they are looking straight at you or not, their shiny shaved heads and pig-tails, are all very queer. And when you first hear them talking together in their own tongue, you think it must be cats trying to learn English; it is a mixture of caterwaul and parrot, more disagreeable in sound than any language I ever heard.

About a year after Mr. Connor had moved into his new house, he got a letter, one night, which made him very unhappy. It told him that his sister and her husband were dead; they had died, both of them in one week, of a dreadful fever. Their two children had had the fever at the same time, but they were getting well; and now, as there was nobody in Italy to take care of them, the letter asked what should be done with them. Would Mr. Connor come out himself, or would he send some one? The Count and his wife had been only a few days ill, and the fever had made them delirious from the first, so that no directions had been given to any one about the children;





and there the two poor little things were, all alone with their nurse in their apartment in the King's palace. They had had to live in the palace always, so that the Count could be ready to attend on the King whenever he was wanted.

Giuseppe and Maria (those were their names) never liked living there. The palace was much too grand, with its marble staircases, and marble floored rooms, so huge and cold; and armed soldiers for sentinels, standing at the corners and doors, to keep people from going into rooms without permission, and to keep watch also, lest somebody should get in and kill the King. The King was always afraid of being killed; there were so many

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unhappy and discontented persons in Italy, who did not want him to be King. Just think how frightful it must be to know every day,—morning, noon, and night,—that there was danger of somebody's coming stealthily into your room to kill you! Who would be a king? It used to make the children afraid whenever they passed these tall soldiers in armor, in the halls. They would hold tight to each other's hands, and run as fast as they could, past them; and when they got out in the open air, they were glad; most of all when their nurse took them into the country, where they could run on the grass and pick flowers. There they used often to see poor little hovels of houses, with gardens, and a

donkey and chickens in the yard, and children playing; and they used to say they wished their father and mother were poor, and lived in a house like that, and kept a donkey. And then the nurse would tell them they were silly children; that it was a fine thing to live in a palace, and have their father one of the King's officers, and their mother one of the most beautiful of the Queen's ladies; but you could n't have made the children believe it. They hated the palace, and everything about it, more and more every day of their lives.

Giuseppe was ten, and Maria was seven. They were never called by their real names: Giuseppe was called Jusy, and Maria was called Rea; Jusy and Rea, no-

body would ever have guessed from that, what their real names were. Maria is pronounced *Mahrea* in Italy; so that was the way she came to be called Rea for shortness. Jusy gave himself his nickname when he was a baby, and it had always stuck to him ever since.

It was enough to make anybody's heart ache to see these two poor little things, when they first got strong enough to totter about after this fever; so weak they felt, they could hardly stand; and they cried more than half the time, thinking about their papa and mamma, dead and buried without their even being able to kiss them once for good-by. The King himself felt so sorry for the little orphans, he came to speak

to them ; and the kind Queen came almost every day, and sent them beautiful toys, and good things to eat ; but nothing comforted the children.

“ What do you suppose will become of us, Jusy ? ” Rea often said ; and Jusy would reply, —

“ I don’t know, Rea. As soon as I’m a man, I can take care of you and myself too, easy enough ; and that won’t be a great while. I shall ask the King to let me be one of his officers like papa.”

“ Oh, no ! no ! Jusy,” Rea would reply. “ Don’t ! Don’t let’s live in this horrid palace. Ask him to give you a little house in the country, with a donkey ; and I will cook the dinner. Caterina will teach me how.”

Caterina was their nurse.

"But there would n't be any money to pay Caterina," Jusy would say.

"The King might give us enough for that, Jusy. He is so kind. I'm sure he would, don't you think so?" was Rea's answer to this difficulty.

"No," said Jusy, "I don't think he would, unless I earned it. Papa had to work for all the money he had."

It was a glad day for the children when the news came that their uncle in America was going to send for them to come and live with him; and that in three weeks the man who was to take them there would arrive. This news came over by telegraph, on that wonderful telegraph wire,

down at the bottom of the ocean. Their kind Uncle George thought he would not leave the children uncheered in their suspense and loneliness one minute longer than he could help; so he sent the message by telegraph; and the very day after this telegraphic message went, Jim set out for Italy.

Jim had travelled so much with Mr. Connor that he was just the best possible person to take charge of the children on their long journey. He knew how to manage everything; and he could speak Italian and French and German well enough to say all that was necessary in places where no English was spoken. Moreover, Jim had been a servant in Mr.

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Connor's father's house all his life; had taken care of Mr. Connor and his sister when they were a little boy and girl together, just as Jusy and Rea were now. He always called Mr. Connor "Mr. George," and his sister "Miss Julia;" and when he set out to go for the children he felt almost as if he were going to the help and rescue of his own grandchildren.

Jusy and Rea did not feel that they were going to a stranger; for they had heard about their Uncle George ever since they could remember; and all about "Jim" too. Almost every year Mr. Connor used to send his sister a new picture of himself; so the children knew very well how he looked.

When the news came that they were to go to America and live with him, they got out all of these pictures they could find, and ranged them in a line on the mantelpiece in their parlor. There was a picture of Jim too, as black as charcoal. At first, Rea had been afraid of this; but Jusy thought it was splendid. Every morning the lonely little creatures used to stand in front of this line of pictures and say, "Good-morning, Uncle George! Good-morning to you, Mr. Black Man! How soon will you get here? We shall be very glad to see you."

It was over a month before he arrived. The children had been told that he might be there in three weeks from the day the

despatch came; and as soon as the three weeks were ended, they began almost to hold their breaths listening for him; they were hardly willing to stir out of the palace for a walk, for fear he might come while they were away. Rea watched at the windows, and Jusy watched at the doorway which led into the corridor.

"He might be afraid of the sentinel at the corner there," he said. "Caterina says there are no palaces in America."

"Goody!" interrupted Rea, "I'm so glad."

"And so perhaps he has never seen a man in armor like that; and I'd better be at the door to run and meet him."

All their clothes were packed ready for

the journey ; and all the things which had belonged to their mamma were packed up too, to go with them. The huge rooms looked drearier than ever. The new chamberlain's wife was impatient to get settled in the apartment herself, and kept coming to look at it, and discussing, in the children's presence, where she would put this or that piece of furniture, and how she would have her pictures hung.

" I think she is a very rude lady," said Jusy. " The Queen said these were our rooms so long as we stayed, just the same as if mamma were here with us ; and I think I see her coming in here that way if mamma was here ! "



## II.

AFTER all their precautions, Jusy and Rea were out when Jim arrived. They had been to take a walk with Caterina; and when they came back, as they passed the big sentinel at the outside gate, he nodded to them pleasantly, and said,—

“He has come!—the black signor from America.” (“Signor” is Italian for “Mr.”)

You see everybody in the palace, from the King down to the scullions in the kitchen, was interested in the two father-



JUSY AND REA.

"He has come! — the black signor from America." — Page 42.



less and motherless children, and glad to hear that Jim had arrived.

The very next day they set off. Jim was impatient to be back in California again; there was nothing to wait for. Caterina was greatly relieved to find that he did not wish her to go with him. The Queen had said she must go, if the black signor wished it; and Caterina was wretched with fright at the thought of the journey, and of the country full of wild beasts and savages. "Worse than Africa, a hundred times," she said, "from all I can hear. But her Majesty says I must go, if I am needed. I'd rather die, but I see no way out of it."

When it came to bidding Rea good-by, however, she was almost ready to beg to

be allowed to go. The child cried and clung to her neck; and Caterina cried and sobbed too.

But the wise Jim had provided himself with a powerful helper. He had bought a little white spaniel, the tiniest creature that ever ran on four legs; she was no more than a doll, in Rea's arms; her hair was like white silk floss. She had a blue satin collar with a gilt clasp and padlock; and on the padlock, in raised letters, was the name "Fairy." Jim had thought of this in New York, and bought the collar and padlock there; and the dog he had bought only one hour before they were to set out on their journey. She was in a beautiful little flannel-lined basket; and when Rea clung

to Caterina's neck crying and sobbing, Jim stepped up to her and said,—

“ Don't cry, missy; here's your little dog to take care of; she'll be scared if she sees you cry.”

“ Mine! Mine! That sweet doggie!” cried Rea. She could not believe her eyes. She stopped crying; and she hardly noticed when the Queen herself kissed her in farewell, so absorbed was she in “ Fairy ” and the blue satin collar. “ Oh, you are a very good black man, Signor Jim,” she cried. “ I never saw such a sweet doggie; I shall carry her in my own arms all the way there.”

It was a hard journey; but the children enjoyed every minute of it. The account

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of all they did and saw, and the good times they had with the kind Jim, would make a long story by itself; but if I told it, we should never get to the Hunter Cats; so I will not tell you anything about the journey at all except that it took about six weeks, and that they reached San Gabriel in the month of March, when everything was green and beautiful, and the country as full of wild flowers as the children had ever seen the country about Florence in Italy.

Mr. Connor had not been idle while Jim was away. After walking up and down his house, with his thinking-cap on, for a few days, looking into the rooms, and trying to contrive how it should be rear-

ranged to accommodate his new and unexpected family, he suddenly decided to build on a small wing to the house. He might as well arrange it in the outset as it would be pleasantest to have it when Jucy and Rea were a young gentleman and a young lady, he thought. What might do for them very well now, while they were little children, would not do at all when they were grown up.

So, as I told you, Mr. Connor being a gentleman who never lost any time in doing a thing he had once made up his mind to, set carpenters at work immediately tearing out half of one side of his new house; and in little over a month, there was almost another little house

joined on to it. There was a good big room for Rea's bedroom, and a small room opening out of it, for her sitting-room; beyond this another room in which her nurse could sleep, while she needed one, and after she grew older, the governess who must come to teach her; and after she did not need any governess, the room would be a pleasant thing to have for her young friends who came to visit her. This kind uncle was planning for a good many years ahead, in this wing to his house.

These rooms for Rea were in the second story. Beneath them were two large rooms, one for Jusy, and one for Jim. A pretty stairway, with a lattice-work wall, went up outside to Rea's room, and at the

door of her room spread out into a sort of loggia, or upstairs piazza, such as Mr. Connor knew she had been used to in Italy. In another year this stairway and loggia would be a bower of all sorts of vines, things grow so fast in California.

And now we are really coming to the Cats. They had arrived before the children did.

When the children got out of the cars at San Gabriel, there stood their Uncle George on the platform waiting for them. Jusy spied him first. "There's Uncle George," he shouted, and ran towards him shouting, "Uncle George! Uncle George! Here we are."

Rea followed close behind, holding up Fairy. "Look at my doggie that Signor black Jim gave me," she cried, holding Fairy up as high as she could reach; and in the next minute she herself, doggie and all, was caught up in Uncle George's arms.

"What makes you cry, Uncle George?" she exclaimed; "we thought you would be very glad to see us!"

"So I am, you dear child," he said. "I am only crying because I am so glad."

But Jusy knew better, and as soon as he could get a chance, he whispered to Rea, "I should have thought you would have known better than to say anything to Uncle George about his having tears in his eyes. It was because we reminded

him so much of mamma, that he cried. I saw the tears come in his eyes, the first minute he saw us, but I was n't going to say a word about it."

Poor little Rea felt badly enough to think she had not understood as quickly as Jusy did ; but the only thing she could think of to do was to spring up in the seat of the wagon, and put her arms around her uncle's neck, and kiss him over and over, saying, " We are going to love you, like, — oh, — like everything, Jusy and me ! I love you better than my doggie ! "

But when she said this, the tears came into Mr. Connor's eyes again ; and Rea looked at Jusy in despair.

" Keep quiet, Rea," whispered Jusy.

" He does n't want us to talk just yet, I guess ; " and Rea sat down again, and tried to comfort herself with Fairy. But she could not keep her eyes from watching her uncle's face. Her affectionate heart was grieved to see him look so sad, instead of full of joy and gladness as she had thought it would be. Finally she stole her hand into his and sat very still without speaking, and that really did comfort Mr. Connor more than anything she could have done. The truth was, Rea looked so much like her mother, that it was almost more than Mr. Connor could bear when he first saw her; and her voice also was like her mother's.

Jusy did not in the least resemble his

mother; he was like his father in every way,—hair as black as black could be, and eyes almost as black as the hair; a fiery, flashing sort of face Jusy had; and a fiery, flashing sort of temper too, I am sorry to say. A good deal like thunder-storms, Jusy's fits of anger were; but, if they were swift and loud, like the thunder, they also were short-lived,—cleared off quickly,—like thunder-storms, and showed blue sky afterward, and a beautiful rainbow of sorrow for the hasty words or deeds.

Rea was fair, with blue eyes and yellow hair, and a temper sunny as her face. In Italy there are so few people with blue eyes and fair hair, that whenever Rea was seen

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in the street, everybody turned to look at her, and asked who she was, and remembered her; and when she came again, they said, "Ecco! Ecco! (That is Italian for Look! Look!) There is the little blue-eyed, golden-haired angel." Rea did not know that the people said this, which was well, for it might have made her vain.

It was six miles from the railway station to Mr. Connor's house. But the house was in sight all the way; it was so high up on the mountain-side that it showed plainly, and as it was painted white, you could see it in all directions like a lighthouse. Mr. Connor liked to be able to see it from all places when he was riding about the valley. He said it looked

friendly to him; as if it said, all the time, "Here I am, you can come home any minute you want to."

After they had driven about half way, Mr. Connor said,—

"Children, do you see that big square house up there on the mountain? That is Connorloa."

"Whose house is it, Uncle George?" said Jusy.

"Why, did you not hear?" replied Mr. Connor. "It is Connorloa."

The children looked still more puzzled.

"Oh," laughed their uncle. "Is it possible nobody has told you the name of my house? I have called it Connorloa, from my own name, and 'loa,' which is the

word in the Sandwich Islands for 'hill.' I suppose I might have called it Connor Hill, but I thought 'loa' was prettier."

"Oh, so do I," said Jusy. "It is lovely. Connorloa, Connorloa," he repeated. "Does n't it sound like some of the names in Italy, Rea?" he said.

"Prettier!" said little Rea. "No word in Italy, so pretty as Connorloa; nor so nice as Uncle George."

"You dear, loving little thing!" cried Uncle George, throwing his arms around her. "You are for all the world your mother over again."

"That's just what I've been saying to myself all the way home, Mr. George," said Jim. "It's seemed to me half the

time as if it were Miss Julia herself; but the boy is not much like you."

"No," said Jusy proudly, throwing back his handsome head, and his eyes flashing. "I am always said to be exactly the portrait of my father; and when I am a man, I am going back to Italy to live in the King's palace, and wear my father's sword."

"I sha'n't go," said Rea, nestling close to her uncle. "I shall stay in Connorloa with Uncle George. I hate palaces. Your house is n't a palace, is it, Uncle George? It looks pretty big."

"No, my dear; not by any means," replied Mr. Connor, laughing heartily. "But why do you hate palaces, my little

Rea? Most people think it would be the finest thing possible to live in a palace."

"I don't," said Rea. "I just hate them; the rooms are so big and so cold; and the marble floors are so slip-py, I've had my knees all black and blue tumbling down on them; and the stairs are worse yet; I used to have to creep on them; and there is a soldier at every corner with a gun and a sword to kill you, if you break any of the rules. I think a palace is just like a prison!"

"Well done, my little Republican!" cried Uncle George.

"What is that?" said Rea.

"I know," said Jusy. "It is a person that does not wish to have any king.

There were Republicans in Italy ; very bad men. Papa said they ought to be killed. Why do you call Rea by that name, Uncle George ? ” and Jusy straightened himself up like a soldier, and looked fierce.

Mr. Connor could hardly keep his face straight as he replied to Jusy : “ My dear boy the word does not mean anything bad in America ; we are all Republicans here. You know we do not have any king. We do not think that is the best way to take care of a country.”

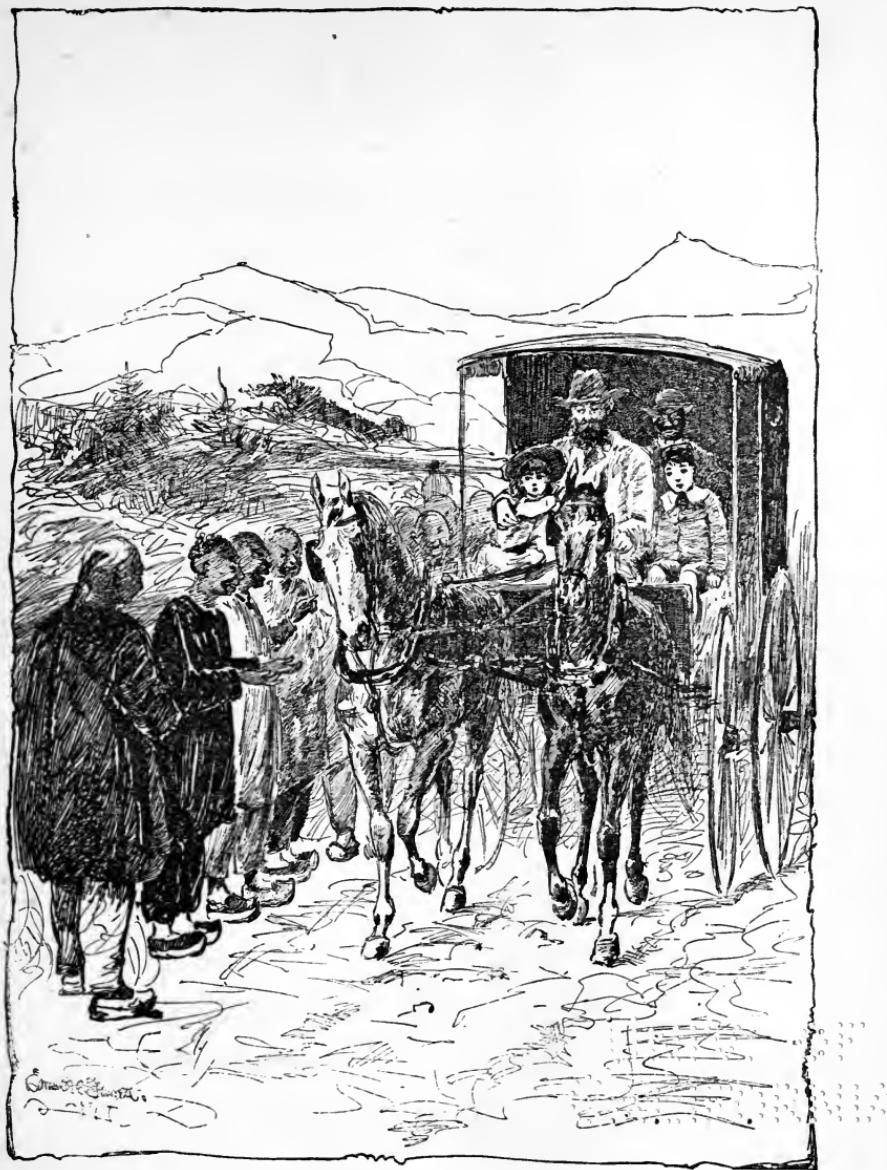
“ My papa thought it was the best way,” haughtily answered Jusy. “ I shall think always as papa did.”

“ All right, my man,” laughed Uncle George. “ Perhaps you will. You can

think and say what you like while you live in America, and nobody will put you in prison for your thoughts or your words, as they might if you lived in Italy."

It was near night when they reached the house. As they drove slowly up the long hill, the Chinamen were just going, on the same road, to their supper. When they heard the sound of the wheels, they stepped off the road, and formed themselves into a line to let the carriage pass, and to get a peep at the children. They all knew about their coming, and were curious to see them.

When Rea caught sight of them, she screamed aloud, and shook with terror, and hid her face on her uncle's shoulder.



"The Chinamen were just going to their supper, and they formed themselves into a line." — PAGE 60.

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“ Are those the savages ? ” she cried. “ Oh, don’t let them kill Fairy ; ” and she nearly smothered the little dog, crowding her down out of sight on the seat between herself and her uncle.

Jusy did not say a word, but he turned pale ; he also thought these must be the savages of which they had heard.

Mr. Connor could hardly speak for laughing. “ Who ever put such an idea as that into your head ? ” he cried. “ Those are men from China ; those are my workmen ; they live at Connorloa all the time. They are very good men ; they would not hurt anybody. There are not any savages here.”

“ Caterina said America was all full of

savages," sobbed Rea,— " savages and wild beasts, such as lions and wolves."

" That girl was a fool," exclaimed Jim. " It was a good thing, Mr. George, you told me not to bring her over."

" I should say so," replied Mr. Connor. " The idea of her trying to frighten these children in that way. It was abominable."

" She did nothing of the kind," cried Jusy, his face very red. " She was talking to her cousin; and she thought we were asleep; and Rea and I listened; and I told Rea it was good enough for us to get so frightened because we had listened. But I did not believe it so much as Rea did."

The Chinamen were all bowing and bending, and smiling in the gladness of

their hearts. Mr. Connor was a good master to them; and they knew it would be to him great pleasure to have these little children in the house.

While driving by he spoke to several of them by name, and they replied. Jusy and Rea listened and looked.

"What are their heads made of, Uncle George?" whispered Rea. "Will they break if they hit them?"

At first, Mr. Connor could not understand what she meant; then in a moment he shouted with laughter.

Chinamen have their heads shorn of all hair, except one little lock at the top; this is braided in a tight braid, like a whip-lash, and hangs down their backs, some-

times almost to the very ground. The longer this queer little braid is, the prouder the Chinaman feels. All the rest of his head is bare and shining smooth. They looked to Rea like the heads of porcelain baby dolls she had had; and that those would break, she knew by sad experience.

How pleased Rea and Jusy were with their beautiful rooms, and with everything in their Uncle George's house, there are no words to tell. They would have been very unreasonable and ungrateful children, if they had not been; for Mr. Connor had not forgotten one thing which could add to their comfort or happiness: books, toys, everything he could think of, or anybody could suggest to him, he had bought.

And when he led little Rea into her bedroom, there stood a sweet-faced young Mexican girl, to be her nurse.

"Anita," he said, "here is your young lady."

"I am very glad to see you, señorita," said the girl, coming forward to take off Rea's hat; on which Rea exclaimed,—

"Why, she is Italian! That is what Caterina called me. And Caterina had a sister whose name was Anita. How did you get over here?"

"I was born here, señorita," replied the girl.

"It is not quite the same word, Rea," said Mr. Connor, "though it sounds so much like it. It was 'signorita' you

were called in Italy; and it is ‘señorita’ that Anita here calls you. That is Spanish; and Anita speaks much more Spanish than English. That is one reason I took her. I want you to learn to speak in Spanish.”

“ Then we shall speak four languages,” said Jusy proudly,—“ Italian, French, and English and Spanish. Our papa spoke eleven. That was one reason he was so useful to the King. Nobody could come from any foreign country that papa could not talk to. My papa said the more languages a man spoke, the more he could do in the world. I shall learn all the American languages before I go back to Italy. Are there as many as nine, Uncle George?”

"Yes, a good many more," replied Uncle George. "Pretty nearly a language for every State, I should say. But the fewer you learn of them the better. If you will speak good English and Spanish, that is all you will need here."

"Shall we not learn the language of the signors from China?" asked Rea.

At which Jim, who had followed, and was standing in the background, looking on with delight, almost went into convulsions of laughter, and went out and told the Chinamen in the kitchen that Miss Rea wished to learn to speak Chinese at once. So they thought she must be a very nice little girl, and were all ready to be her warm friends.

The next morning, as Rea was dressing, she heard a great caterwauling and miaowing. Fairy, who was asleep on the foot of her bed, sprang up and began to bark furiously; all the while, however, looking as if she were frightened half to death. Never before had Fairy heard so many cats' voices at once.

Rea ran to the open window; before she reached it, she heard Jusy calling to her from below,—

"Rea! Rea! Are you up? Come out and see the cats."

Jusy had been up ever since light, roaming over the whole place: the stables, the Chinamen's quarters, the tool-house, the kitchen, the wood-pile; there was noth-

ing he had not seen ; and he was in a state of such delight he could not walk straight or steadily ; he went on the run ; and with a hop, skip, and jump from each thing to the next.

"Hurry, Rea!" he screamed. "Do hurry. Never mind your hair. Come down. They'll be done!"

Still the miaowing and caterwauling continued.

"Oh, hurry, hurry, Anita," said Rea. "Please let me go down; I'll come up to have my hair done afterwards. What is it, Anita? Is it really cats? Are there a thousand?"

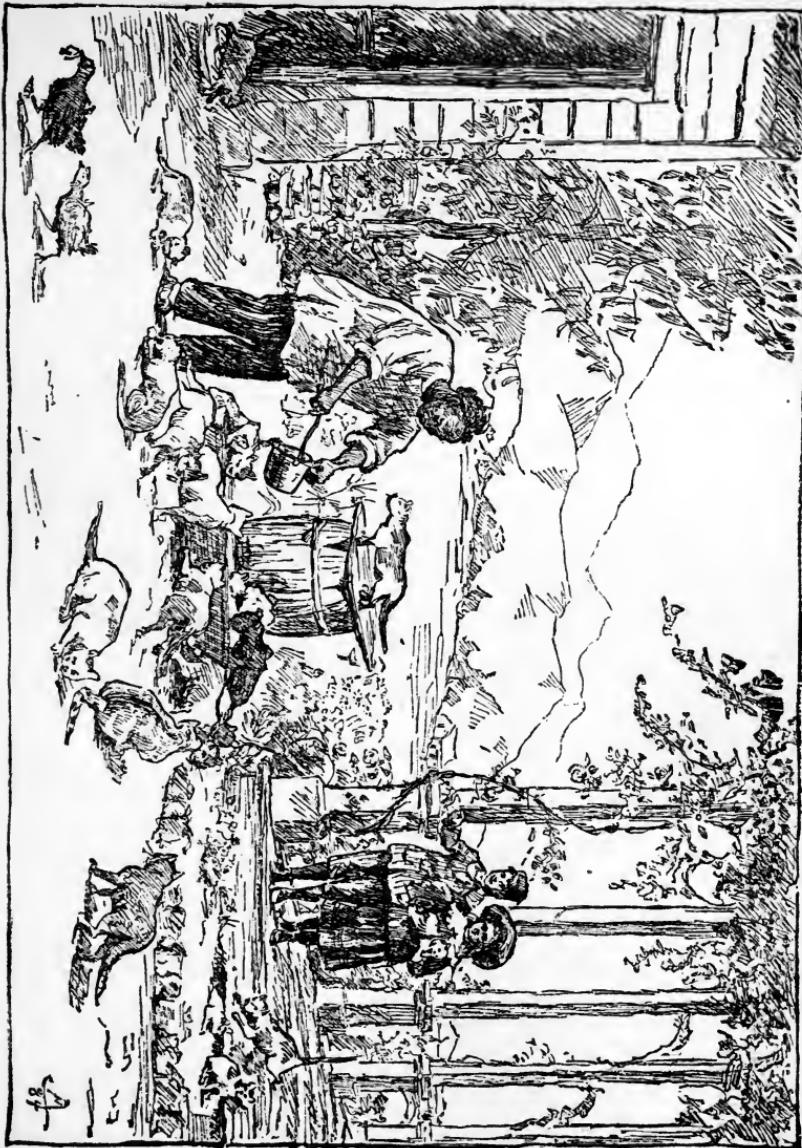
Anita laughed. "No, señorita," she said. "Only seventeen! And you will

see them every morning just the same. They always make this noise. They are being fed; and there is only a very little meat for so many. Jim keeps them hungry all the time, so they will hunt better."

" Hunt! " cried Rea.

" Yes," said Anita. " That is what we keep them for, to hunt the gophers and rabbits and moles. They are clearing them out fast. Jim says by another spring there won't be a gopher on the place."

Before she had finished speaking, Rea was downstairs and out on the east veranda. At the kitchen door stood a Chinaman, throwing bits of meat to the scrambling seventeen cats,—black, white, tortoise-shell, gray, maltese, yellow, every



THE CHINAMAN, AH FOO, FEEDING THE CATS.—Page 70.



color, size, shape of cat that was ever seen. And they were plunging and leaping and racing about so, that it looked like twice as many cats as there really were, and as if every cat had a dozen tails. "Sfz! Sfz! Sputter! Scratch, spp, spt! Growl, growl, miaow, miaow," they went, till, between the noise and the flying around, it was a bedlam.

Jusy had laughed till the tears ran out of his eyes; and Ah Foo (that was the Chinaman's name) was laughing almost as hard, just to see Jusy laugh. The cats were an old story to Ah Foo; he had got over laughing at them long ago.

Ah Foo was the cook's brother. While Jim had been away, Ah Foo had waited at

table, and done all the housework except the cooking. The cook's name was Wang Hi. He was old; but Ah Foo was young, not more than twenty. He did not like to work in the house, and he was glad Jim had got home, so he could go to working out of doors again. He was very glad, too, to see the children; and he had spoken so pleasantly to Jusy, that in one minute Jusy had lost all his fear of Chinamen.

When Rea saw Ah Foo, she hung back, and was afraid to go nearer.

"Oh, come on! come on!" shouted Jusy. "Don't be afraid! He is just like Jim, only a different color. They have men of all kinds of colors here in America. They are just like other people, all but the

color. Come on, Rea. Don't be silly. You can't half see from there!"

But Rea was afraid. She would not come farther than the last pillar of the veranda. "I can see very well here," she said; and there she stood clinging to the pillar. She was half afraid of the cats, too, besides being very much afraid of the Chinaman.

The cats' breakfast was nearly over. In fact, they had had their usual allowance before Rea came down; but Ah Foo had gone on throwing out meat for Rea to see the scrambling. Presently he threw the last piece, and set the empty plate up on a shelf by the kitchen door. The cats knew very well by this sign that breakfast was

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over ; after the plate was set on that shelf, they never had a mouthful more of meat ; and it was droll to see the change that came over all of them as soon as they saw this done. In less than a second, they changed from fierce, fighting, clawing, scratching, snatching, miaowing, spitting, growling cats, into quiet, peaceful cats, some sitting down licking their paws, or washing their faces, and some lying out full-length on the ground and rolling ; some walking off in a leisurely and dignified manner, as if they had had all they wanted, and would n't thank anybody for another bit of meat, if they could have it as well as not. This was almost as funny as the first part of it.

After Ah Foo had set the plate in its place on the shelf, he turned to go into the kitchen to help about the breakfast; but just as he had put his hand on the door-handle, there came a terrible shriek from Rea, a fierce sputter from one of the cats, and a faint bark of a dog, all at once; and Ah Foo, looking around, sprang just in time to rescue Fairy from the jaws of Skipper, one of the biggest and fiercest of the cats.

Poor little Fairy, missing her mistress, had trotted downstairs; and smelling on the floor wherever Rea had set her feet, had followed her tracks, and had reached the veranda just in time to be spied by Skipper, who arched his back, set his tail up straight and stiff as a poker, and, making

one bound from the ground to the middle of the veranda floor, clutched Fairy with teeth and claws, and would have made an end of her in less than one minute if Ah Foo had not been there. But Ah Foo could move almost as quickly as a cat; and it was not a quarter of a second after Fairy gave her piteous cry, when she was safe and sound in her mistress's arms, and Ah Foo had Skipper by the scruff of his neck, and was holding him high up, boxing his ears, right and left, with blows so hard they rang.

“Cat heap wicked,” he said. “You killee missy’s dog, I killee you!” and he flung Skipper with all his might and main through the air.

Rea screamed, "Oh, don't!" She did not want to see the cat killed, even if he had flown at Fairy. "It will kill him," she cried.

Ah Foo laughed. "Heap hard killee cat," he said. "Cat get nine time life good;" and as he spoke, Skipper, after whirling through the air in several somersaults, came down on his feet all right, and slunk off into the woodpile.

"I tellee you," said Ah Foo, chuckling.

"Thatee isee heapee goodee manee," cried Jusy. "I havee learnee talkee oneee language already!"

A roar of laughter came from the dining-room window. There stood Uncle George, holding his sides.

"Bravo, Jusy!" he exclaimed. "You have begun on pigeon English, have you, for the first of your nine languages?"

"Is n't that Chinese?" said Jusy, much crestfallen.

"Oh, no!" said Uncle George, "not by any manner of means. It is only the Chinese way of talking English. It is called pigeon English. But come in to breakfast now, and I will tell you all about my cats,—my hunting cats, I call them. They are just as good as a pack of hunting dogs; and better, for they do not need anybody to go with them."

How pleasant the breakfast-table looked! — a large square table set with gay china, pretty flowers in the middle, nice broiled

chicken and fried potatoes, and baked apples and cream ; and Jusy's and Rea's bright faces, one on Mr. Connor's left hand, the other on his right.

As Jim moved about the table and waited on them, he thought to himself, " Now, if this does n't make Mr. George well, it will be because he can't be cured."

Jim had found the big house so lonely, with nobody in it except Mr. Connor and the two Chinese servants, he would have been glad to see almost anything in the shape of a human being,—man, woman, or child,—come there to live. How much more, then, these two beautiful and merry children !

Jusy and Rea thought they had never in all their lives tasted anything so good as the broiled chicken and the baked apples.

"Heapee goodee cookee, Uncle George!" said Jusy. He was so tickled with the Chinaman's way of talking, he wanted to keep doing it.

"Tooee muchee putee onee letter e, Master Jusy," said Uncle George. "After you have listened to their talk a little longer, you will see that they do not add the 'ee' to every word. It is hard to imitate them exactly."

Jusy was crestfallen. He thought he had learned a new language in half an hour, and he was proud of it. But no new

language was ever learned without more trouble and hard work than that; not even pigeon English!





### III.

IT had come about by chance, Mr. Connor's keeping this pack of hunting cats. He had been greatly troubled by gophers and rabbits: the gophers killed his trees by gnawing their roots; the rabbits burrowed under his vines, ate the tender young leaves, and gnawed the stems.

Jim had tried every device,—traps of all kinds and all the poisons he could hear of. He had also tried drowning the poor little

gophers out by pouring water down their holes. But, spite of all he could do, the whole hill was alive with them. It had been wild ground so long, and covered so thick with bushes, that it had been like a nice house built on purpose for all small wild animals to live in.

I suppose there must have been miles of gophers' underground tunnels, leading from hole to hole. They popped their heads up, and you saw them scampering away wherever you went; and in the early morning it was very funny to see the rabbits jumping and leaping to get off out of sight when they heard people stirring. They were of a beautiful gray color, with a short bushy tail, white at the end. On

account of this white tip to their tails, they are called "cotton-tails."

When Mr. Connor first moved up on the hill, Jim used to shoot a cotton-tail almost every day, and some days he shot two. The rabbits, however, are shyer than the gophers; when they find out that they get shot as soon as they are seen, and that these men who shoot them have built houses and mean to stay, they will gradually desert their burrows and move away to new homes.

But the gopher is not so afraid. He lives down in the ground, and can work in the dark as well as in the light; and he likes roots just as well as he likes the stems above ground; so as long as

he stays in his cellar houses, he is hard to reach.

The gopher is a pretty little creature, with a striped back,—almost as pretty as a chipmonk. It seems a great pity to have to kill them all off; but there is no help for it; fruit-trees and gophers cannot live in the same place.

Soon after Mr. Connor moved into his new house, he had a present of a big cat from the Mexican woman who sold him milk.

She said to Jim one day, “Have you got a cat in your house yet?”

“No,” said Jim. “Mr. George does not like cats.”

“No matter,” said she, “you have got to have one. The gophers and squirrels in

this country are a great deal worse than rats and mice. They'll come right into your kitchen and cellar, if your back is turned a minute, and eat you out of house and home. I'll give you a splendid cat. She's a good hunter. I've got more cats than I know what to do with."

So she presented Jim with a fine, big black and white cat; and Jim named the cat "Mexican," because a Mexican woman gave her to him.

The first thing Mexican did, after getting herself established in her new home in the woodpile, was to have a litter of kittens, six of them. The next thing she did, as soon as they got big enough to eat meat, was to go out hunting for food for them;

and one day, as Mr. Connor was riding up the hill, he saw her running into the wood-pile, with a big fat gopher in her mouth.

“ Ha ! ” thought Mr. Connor to himself. “ There ’s an idea ! If one cat will kill one gopher in a day, twenty cats would kill twenty gophers in a day ! I ’ll get twenty cats, and keep them just to hunt gophers. They ’ll clear the place out quicker than poison, or traps, or drowning.”

“ Jim,” he called, as soon as he entered the house,—“ Jim, I ’ve got an idea. I saw Mexican just now carrying a dead gopher to her kittens. Does she kill many ? ”

“ Oh, yes, sir,” replied Jim. “ Before she got her kittens I used to see her with them

every day. But she does not go out so often now."

"Good mother!" said Mr. Connor. "Stays at home with her family, does she?"

"Yes, sir," laughed Jim; "except when she needs to go out to get food for them."

"You may set about making a collection of cats, Jim, at once," said Mr. Connor. "I'd like twenty."

Jim stared. "I thought you didn't like cats, Mr. George," he exclaimed. "I was afraid to bring Mexican home, for fear you would n't like having her about."

"No more do I," replied Mr. Connor. But I do not dislike them so much as I

dislike gophers. And don't you see, if we have twenty, and they all hunt gophers as well as she does, we 'll soon have the place cleared ? "

" We 'd have to feed them, sir," said Jim. " So many 's that, they 'd never make all their living off gophers."

" Well, we 'l feed them once a day, just a little, so as not to let them starve. But we must keep them hungry, or else they won't hunt."

" Very well, sir," said Jim. " I will set about it at once."

" Beg or buy them," laughed Mr. Connor. " I 'l pay for them, if I can't get them any other way. There is room in the woodpile for fifty to live."

Jim did not much like the idea of having such an army of cats about; but he went faithfully to work; and in a few weeks he had seventeen. One morning, when they were all gathered together to be fed, he called Mr. Connor to look at them.

"Do you think there are enough, sir?" he said.

"Goodness! Jim," cried Mr. Connor, "what did you get so many for? We shall be overrun."

Jim laughed. "I'm three short yet, sir, of the number you ordered," he said. "There are only seventeen in that batch."

"Only seventeen! You are joking, Jim," cried Mr. Connor; and he tried to

count ; but the cats were in such a scrambling mass, he could not count them.

"I give it up, Jim," he said at last.  
"But are there really only seventeen?"

"That's all, sir, and it takes quite a lot of meat to give them all a bite of a morning. I think here are enough to begin with, unless you have set your heart, sir, on having twenty. Mexican has got six kittens, you know, and they will be big enough to hunt before long. That will make twenty-three."

"Plenty ! plenty !" said Mr. Connor.  
"Don't get another one. And, Jim," he added, "would n't it be better to feed them at night? Then they will be hungry the next morning."

"I tried that, sir," said Jim, "but they did n't seem so lively. I don't give them any more than just enough to whet their appetites. At first they sat round the door begging for more, half the morning, and I had to stone them away; now they understand it. In a few minutes, they 'll all be off; and you won't see much of any of them till to-morrow morning. They are all on hand then, as regular as the sun rises."

"Where do they sleep?" said Mr. Connor.

"In the woodpile, every blessed cat of them," replied Jim. "And there are squirrels living in there too. It is just a kind of cage, that woodpile, with its crooks

and turns. I saw a squirrel going up, up, in it the other day; I thought he'd make his way out to the top; I thought the cats would have cleaned them all out before this time, but they have n't; I saw one there only yesterday."

Jim had counted too soon on Mexican's kittens. Five of them came to a sad end. Their mother carried to them, one day, a gopher which she found lying dead in the road. Poor cat-mother! I suppose she thought to herself when she saw it lying there, "Oh, how lucky! I sha'n't have to sit and wait and watch for a gopher this morning. Here is one all ready, dead!" But that gopher had died of poison which had been put down his hole;

and as soon as the little kittens ate it, they were all taken dreadfully ill, and all but one died. Either he had n't had so much of the gopher as the rest had, or else he was stronger ; he lingered along in misery for a month, as thin, wretched-looking a little beast as ever was seen ; then he began to pick up his flesh, and finally got to be as strong a cat as there was in the whole pack.

He was most curiously marked : in addition to the black and white of his mother's skin, he had gray and yellow mottled in all over him. Jim thought it looked as if his skin had been painted, so he named him Fresco.

Jim had names for all the best cats ; there were ten that were named. The

other seven, Jim called "the rabble;" but of the ten he had named, Jim grew to be very proud. He thought they were remarkable cats.

First there was Mexican, the original first-comer in the colony. Then there was Big Tom, and another Tom called China Tom, because he would stay all the time he could with the Chinamen. He was dark-gray, with black stripes on him.

Next in size and beauty was a huge black cat, called Snowball. He was given to Mr. Connor by a miner's wife, who lived in a cabin high up on the mountain. She said she would let him have the cat on the condition that he would continue to call him Snowball, as she had

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done. She named him Snowball, she said, to make herself laugh every time she called him, he being black as coal; and there was so little to laugh at where she lived, she liked a joke whenever she could contrive one.

Then there was Skipper, the one who nearly ate up Fairy that first morning; he also was as black as coal, and fierce as a wolf; all the cats were more or less afraid of him. Jim named him Skipper, because he used to race about in trees like a squirrel. Way up to the very top of the biggest sycamore trees in the cañon back of the house, Skipper would go, and leap from one bough to another. He was especially fond of birds, and in this way he

caught many. He thought birds were much better eating than gophers.

Mexican, Big Tom, China Tom, Snowball, Skipper, and Fresco,—these are six of the names; the other four were not remarkable; they did not mean anything in especial; only to distinguish their owners from the rest, who had no names at all.

Oh, yes; I am forgetting the drollest of all: that was Humbug. Jim gave her that name because she was so artful and sly about getting more than her share of the meat. She would watch for the biggest pieces, and pounce on them right under some other cat's nose, and almost always succeed in getting them. So Jim

named her Humbug, which was a very good name; for she always pretended to be quieter and stiller than the rest, as if she were not in any great hurry about her breakfast; and then she whisked in, and got the biggest pieces, and twice as much as any other cat there.

The other names were Jenny, Capitan, and Growler. That made the ten.

In a very few days after Jusy and Rea arrived, they knew all these cats' names as well as Jim did; and they were never tired of watching them at their morning meal, or while they were prowling, looking, and waiting for gophers and rabbits.

For a long time, Rea carried Fairy tight in her arms whenever there was a cat in

sight; but after a while, the cats all came to know Fairy so well that they took no notice of her, and it was safe to put her on the ground and let her run along. But Rea kept close to her, and never forgot her for a single minute.

There were many strange things which these cats did, besides hunting the gophers. They used also to hunt snakes. In one of the rocky ravines near the house there were large snakes of a beautiful golden-brown color. On warm days these used to crawl out, and lie sunning themselves on the rocks. Woe to any such snake, if one of the cats caught sight of him! Big Tom had a special knack at killing them. He would make a bound, and come down

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with his fore claws firm planted in the middle of the snake's back ; then he would take it in his teeth, and shake it, flapping its head against the stones every time, till it was more dead than alive. You would not have thought that so big a snake could have been so helpless in the claws of a cat.

Another thing the cats did, which gave the men much amusement, was, that when they had killed rabbits they carried the bodies into the mules' stables. Mules are terribly frightened at the smell of a dead rabbit. Whenever this happened, a great braying and crying and stamping would be heard in the stables ; and on running to see what was the matter, there would be found

Big Tom or Skipper, sitting down calm and happy by the side of a dead rabbit, which he had carried in, and for some reason or other best known to himself had deposited in plain sight of the mules. Why they chose to carry dead rabbits there, unless it was that they enjoyed seeing the mules so frightened, there seemed no explaining. They never took dead gophers up there, or snakes; only the rabbits. Once a mule was so frightened that he plunged till he broke his halter, got free, and ran off down the hill; and the men had a big chase before they overtook him.

But the queerest thing of all that happened, was that the cats adopted a skunk;

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or else it was the skunk that adopted the cats; I don't know which would be the proper way of stating it; but at any rate the skunk joined the family, lived with them in the woodpile, came with them every morning to be fed, and went off with them hunting gophers every day. It must have been there some time before Jim noticed it, for when he first saw it, it was already on the most familiar and friendly terms with all the cats. It was a pretty little black and white creature, and looked a good deal like one of Mexican's kittens.

Finally it became altogether too friendly: Jim found it in the kitchen cellar one day; and a day or two after that, it actually

walked into the house. Mr. Connor was sitting in his library writing. He heard a soft, furry foot patting on the floor, and thought it was Fairy. Presently he looked up; and, to his horror, there was the cunning little black and white skunk in the doorway, looking around and sniffing curiously at everything, like a cat. Mr. Connor held his breath and did not dare stir, for fear the creature should take it into its head that he was an enemy. Seeing everything so still, the skunk walked in, walked around both library and dining-room, taking minute observations of everything by means of its nose. Then it softly patted out again, across the hall, and out of the front door, down the veranda steps.

It had seemed an age to Mr. Connor; he could hardly help laughing too, as he sat there in his chair, to think how helpless he, a grown-up man, felt before a creature no bigger than that,—a little thing whose neck he could wring with one hand; and yet he no more dared to touch it, or try to drive it out, than if it had been a roaring lion. As soon as it was fairly out of the way, Mr. Connor went in search of Jim.

“ Jim,” said he, “ that skunk you were telling me about, that the cats had adopted, seems to be thinking of adopting me; he spent some time in the library with me this morning, looking me over; and I am afraid he liked me and the place much too

well. I should like to have him killed. Can you manage it?"

"Yes, sir," laughed Jim. "I was thinking I'd have to kill him. I caught him in the cellar a day or two since, and I thought he was getting to feel too much at home. I'll fix him."

So the next morning Jim took a particularly nice and tempting piece of meat, covered it with poison, and just as the cats' breakfast was finished, and the cats slowly dispersing, he threw this tidbit directly at the little skunk. He swallowed it greedily, and before noon he was dead.

Jim could not help being sorry when he saw him stretched out stiff near his home in the woodpile. "He was a pert

little rascal ; " said Jim. " I did kind o' hate to kill him; but he should have stayed with his own folks, if he wanted to be let alone. It 's too dangerous having skunks round."

In less than a year's time, there was not a rabbit to be seen on Mr. Connor's grounds, and only now and then a gopher, the hunter cats had done their work so thoroughly.

But there was one other enemy that Mr. Connor would have to be rid of, before he could have any great success with his fruit orchards. You will be horrified to hear the name of this enemy. It was the linnet. Yes, the merry, chirping, confiding little linnets, with their pretty red heads and

bright eyes, they also were enemies, and must be killed. They were too fond of apricots and peaches and pears and raspberries, and all other nice fruits.

If birds only had sense enough, when they want a breakfast or dinner of fruit, to make it off one, or even two,—eat the peach or the pear or whatever it might be all up, as we do,—they might be tolerated in orchards; nobody would grudge a bird one peach or cherry. But that is n't their way. They like to hop about in the tree, and take a nip out of first one, then another, and then another, till half the fruit on the tree has been bitten into and spoiled. In this way, they ruin bushels of fruit every season.

"I wonder if we could not teach the cats to hunt linnets, Jim," said Mr. Connor one morning. It was at the breakfast-table.

"O Uncle George! the dear sweet little linnets!" exclaimed Rea, ready to cry.

"Yes, my dear sweet little girl," said Uncle George. "The dear sweet little linnets will not leave us a single whole peach or apricot or cherry to eat."

"No!" said Jusy, "they're a perfect nuisance. They've pecked at every apricot on the trees already."

"I don't care," said Rea. "Why can't they have some? I'd just as soon eat after a linnet as not. Their little bills must be all clean and sweet. Don't have them killed, Uncle George."

"No danger but that there will be enough left, dear," said Uncle George. "However many we shoot, there will be enough left. I believe we might kill a thousand to-day and not know the difference."

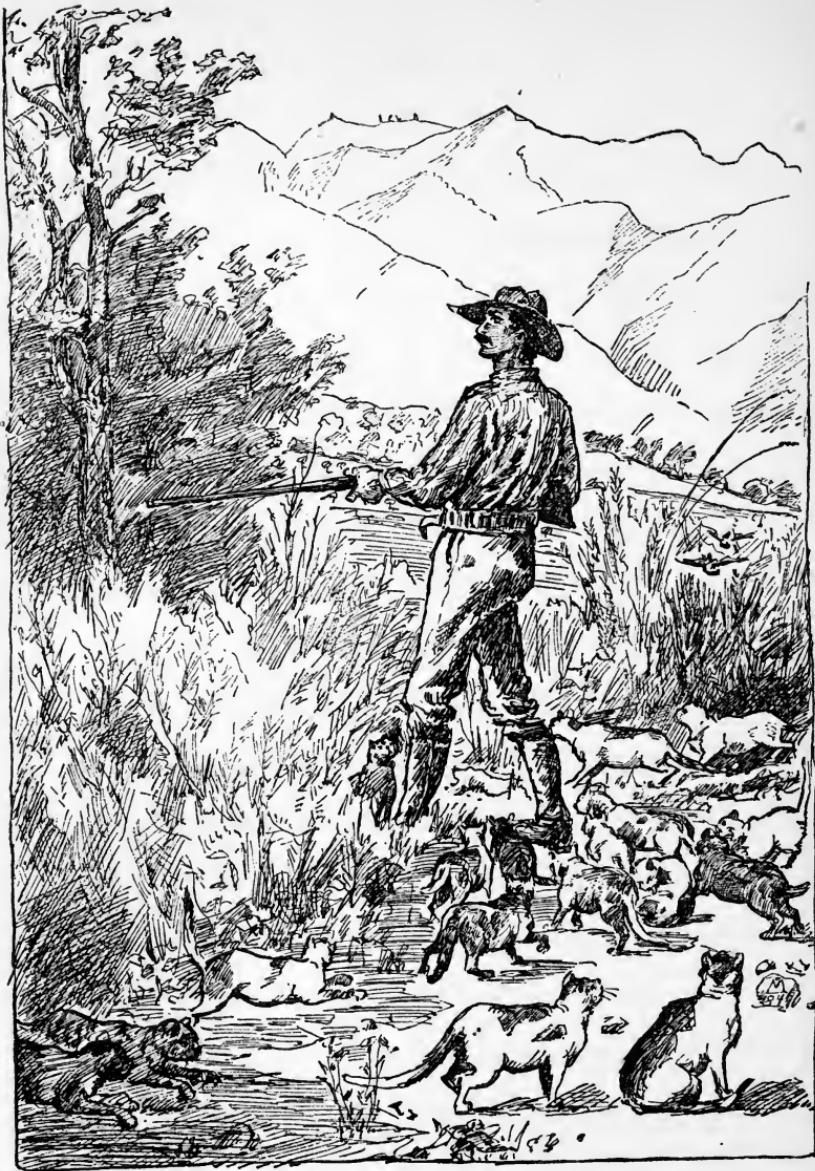
The cats had already done a good deal at hunting linnets on their own account, in a clandestine and irregular manner. They were fond of linnet flesh, and were only too glad to have the assistance of an able-bodied man with a gun.

When they first comprehended Jim's plan,—that he would go along with his gun, and they should scare the linnets out of the trees, wait for the shot, watch to see where the birds fell, and then run and pick

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them up,—it was droll to see how clever they became in carrying it out. Retriever dogs could not have done better. The trouble was, that Jim could shoot birds faster than the cats could eat them; and no cat would stir from his bird till it was eaten up, sometimes feathers and all; and after he had had three or four, he did n't care about any more that day. To tell the truth, after the first few days, they seemed a little tired of the linnet diet, and did not work with so much enthusiasm. But at first it was droll, indeed, to see their excitement. As soon as Jim appeared with his gun, every cat in sight would come scampering; and it would not be many minutes before the rest of the band — however they





JIM AND THE CATS HUNTING LINNETS.—Page 111.

might have been scattered,—would somehow or other get wind of what was going on, and there would be the whole seventeen in a pack at Jim's heels, all keeping a sharp lookout on the trees; then, as soon as a cat saw a linnet, he would make for the tree, sometimes crouch under the tree, sometimes run up it; in either case the linnet was pretty sure to fly out: pop, would go Jim's rifle; down would come the linnet; helter-skelter would go the cats to the spot where it fell; and in a minute more, there would be nothing to be seen of that linnet, except a few feathers and a drop or two of blood on the ground.

Jusy liked to go with Jim on these hunting expeditions. But Rea would

never go. She used to sit sorrowfully at home, and listen for the gunshots ; and at every shot she heard, she would exclaim to Anita, " Oh, dear! Oh, dear! There 's another dear little linnet dead. I think Jusy is a cruel, cruel boy! I would n't see them shot for anything, and I don't like the cats any more."

" But," said Anita, " my little señorita did not mind having the gophers killed. It does not hurt the linnets half so much to be shot dead in one second, as it does the gophers to be caught in the cats' claws, and torn to pieces sometimes while they are yet alive. The shot-gun kills in a second."

" I don't care," said Rea. " It seems different ; the linnets are so pretty."

"That is not a reason for pitying them any more," said Anita gravely. "You did not find those old Indians you saw yesterday pretty. On the contrary, they were frightful to look at; yet you pitied them so much that you shed tears."

"Oh, yes!" cried Rea, "I should think I did; and, Anita, I dreamed about them all night long. I am going to ask Uncle George to build a little house for them up in the cañon. There is plenty of room there he does not want; and then nobody could drive them out of that place as long as they live; and I could carry them their dinner every day. Don't you think he will?"

"Bless your kind little heart!" said

Anita. "That would be asking a great deal of your Uncle George, but he is so kind, perhaps he will. If somebody does not take compassion on the poor things, they will starve, that is certain."

"I shall ask him the minute he comes in," said Rea. "I am going down on the piazza now to watch for him." And taking Fairy in her arms, Rea hurried downstairs, went out on the veranda, and, climbing up into the hammock, was sound asleep in ten minutes.

She was waked up by feeling herself violently swung from side to side, and opening her eyes, saw Jusy standing by her side, his face flushed with the heat, his eyes sparkling.

"O Rea!" he said. "We have had a splendid hunt! What do you think! Jim has shot twenty linnets in this one morning! and that Skipper, he's eaten five of them! He's as good as a regular hunting dog."

"Where's Uncle George?" asked Rea sleepily, rubbing her eyes. "I want Uncle George! I don't want you to tell me anything about the cats' eating the linnets. I hate them! They're cruel!"

"Tis n't cruel either!" retorted Jusy. "They've got to be killed. All people that have orchards have to kill birds."

"I won't, when I have an orchard," said Rea.

"Then you won't have any orchard. That will be all," said Jusy. "At least, you won't have any fruit orchard. You'll have just a tree orchard."

"Well, a tree orchard is good enough for anybody," replied Rea half crossly. She was not yet quite wide awake. "There is plenty of fruit in stores, to buy. We could buy our fruit."

"Are you talking in your sleep, Rea?" cried Jusy, looking hard at her. "I do believe you are! What ails you? The men that have the fruit to sell, had to kill all the linnets and things, just the same way, or else they would n't have had any fruit. Can't you see?"

No, Rea could not see; and what was

more, she did not want to see ; and as the proverb says, "There are none so blind as those who won't see."

"Don't talk any more about it, Jusy," she said. "Do you think Uncle George would build a little house up the cañon for poor old Ysidro ?"

"Who!" exclaimed Jusy.

"Oh, you cruel boy!" cried Rea. "You don't think of anything but killing linnets, and such cruel things; I think you are real wicked. Don't you know those poor old Indians we saw yesterday? — the ones that are going to be turned out of their house, down in San Gabriel by the church. I have been thinking about them ever since; and I dreamed last night that Uncle

George built them a house. I'm going to ask him to."

"I bet you anything he won't, then," said Jusy. "The horrid old beggars! He would n't have such looking things round!"

Rea was wide awake now. She fixed her lovely blue eyes on Jusy's face with a look which made him ashamed. "Jusy," she said, "I can't help it if you are older than I am; I must say, I think you are cruel. You like to kill linnets; and now you won't be sorry for these poor old Indians, just because they are dirty and horrid-looking. You'd look just as bad yourself, if your skin was black, and you were a hundred years old, and had n't got

a penny in the world. You are real hard-hearted, Jusy, I do think you are!" and the tears came into Rea's eyes.

"What is all this?" said Uncle George, coming up the steps. "Not quarrelling, my little people!"

"Oh, no! no!" cried both the children eagerly.

"I never quarrel with Rea," added Jusy proudly. "I hope I am old enough to know better than that."

"I'm only two years the youngest," said Rea, in a mortified tone. "I think I am old enough to be quarrelled with; and I do think you're cruel, Jusy."

This made Uncle George smile. "Look out!" he said. "You will be in a quarrel

yet, if you are not careful. What is it, Rea?"

While Rea was collecting her thoughts to reply, Jusy took the words out of her mouth.

"She thinks I am cruel, because I said I did n't believe you would build a house for Indians up in your cañon."

"It was not that!" cried Rea. "You are real mean, Jusy!"

And so I think, myself, he was. He had done just the thing which is so often done in this world,—one of the unfairest and most provoking of things; he had told the truth in such a way as to give a wrong impression, which is not so very far different, in my opinion, from telling a lie.

"A home for Indians up in the cañon!" exclaimed Uncle George, drawing Rea to him, and seating her on his knee. "Did my little tender-hearted Rea want me to do that? It would take a very big house, girlie, for all the poor Indians around here;" and Uncle George looked lovingly at Rea, and kissed her hair, as she nestled her head into his neck. "Just like her mother," he thought. "She would have turned every house into an asylum if she could."

"Oh, not for all the Indians, Uncle George," said Rea, encouraged by his kind smile,—"I am not such a fool as Jusy thinks,—only for those two old ones that are going to be turned out of their home

they 've always lived in. You know the ones I mean."

" Ah, yes,—old Ysidro and his wife. Well, Rea, I had already thought of that myself. So you were not so much ahead of me."

" There!" exclaimed Rea triumphantly, turning to Jusy. " What do you say now?"

Jusy did not know exactly what to say, he was so astonished; and as he saw Jim and the cats coming up the road at that minute, he gladly took the opportunity to spring down from the veranda and run to meet them.



## IV.

THE story of old Ysidro was indeed a sad one; and I think, with Rea, that any one must be hard-hearted, who did not pity him. He was a very old Indian; nobody knew how old; but he looked as if he must be a hundred at least. Ever since he could remember, he had lived in a little house in San Gabriel. The missionaries who first settled San Gabriel had given a small piece of land to his father, and on it

his father had built this little house of rough bricks made of mud. Here Ysidro was born, and here he had always lived. His father and mother had been dead a long time. His brothers and sisters had all died or gone away to live in some other place.

When he was a young man, he had married a girl named Carmena. She was still living, almost as old as he; all their children had either died, or married and gone away, and the two old people lived alone together in the little mud house.

They were very poor; but they managed to earn just enough to keep from starving. There was a little land around

the house,—not more than an acre; but it was as much as the old man could cultivate. He raised a few vegetables, chiefly beans, and kept some hens.

Carmena had done fine washing for the San Gabriel people as long as her strength held out; but she had not been able for some years to do that. All she could do now was to embroider and make lace. She had to stay in bed most of the time, for she had the rheumatism in her legs and feet so she could but just hobble about; but there she sat day after day, propped up in her bed, sewing. It was lucky that the rheumatism had not gone into her hands, for the money she earned by making lace was the chief part of their living.

Sometimes Ysidro earned a little by days' works in the fields or gardens; but he was so old, people did not want him if they could get anybody else, and nobody would pay him more than half wages.

When he could not get anything else to do, he made mats to sell. He made them out of the stems of a plant called yucca; but he had to go a long way to get these plants. It was slow, tedious work making the mats, and the store-keepers gave him only seventy-five cents apiece for them; so it was very little he could earn in that way.

Was not this a wretched life? Yet they seemed always cheerful, and they were as much attached to this poor little mud

hovel as any of you can be to your own beautiful homes.

Would you think any one could have the heart to turn those two poor old people out of their home? It would not seem as if a human being could be found who would do such a thing. But there was. He was a lawyer; I could tell you his true name, but I will not. He had a great deal to do with all sorts of records and law papers, about land and titles and all such things.

There has always been trouble about the ownership of land in California, because first it belonged to Spain, and then it belonged to Mexico; and then we fought with Mexico, and Mexico gave it to us.

So you can easily see that where lands are passed along in that way, through so many hands, it might often be hard to tell to whom they justly belonged.

Of course this poor old Ysidro did not know anything about papers. He could not read or write. The missionaries gave the land to his father more than a hundred years ago, and his father gave it to him, and that was all Ysidro knew about it.

Well, this lawyer was rummaging among papers and titles and maps of estates in San Gabriel, and he found out that there was this little bit of land near the church, which had been overlooked by everybody, and to which nobody had any written title. He went over and looked

at it, and found Ysidro's house on it; and Ysidro told him he had always lived there; but the lawyer did not care for that.

Land is worth a great deal of money now in San Gabriel. This little place of Ysidro's was worth a good many hundred dollars; and this lawyer was determined to have it. So he went to work in ways I cannot explain to you, for I do not understand them myself; and you could not understand them even if I could write them out exactly: but it was all done according to law; and the lawyer got it decided by the courts and the judges in San Francisco that this bit of land was his.

When this was all done, he had not quite boldness enough to come forward himself,

and turn the poor old Indians out. Even he had some sense of shame ; so he slyly sold the land to a man who did not know anything about the Indians being there.

You see how cunning this was of him ! When it came to the Indians being turned out, and the land taken by the new owner, this lawyer's name would not need to come out in the matter at all. But it did come out ; so that a few people knew what a mean, cruel thing he had done. Just for the sake of the price of an acre of land, to turn two aged helpless people out of house and home to starve ! Do you think those dollars will ever do that man any good as long as he lives ? No, not if they had been a million.

Well, Mr. Connor was one of the persons who had found out about this; and he had at first thought he would help Ysidro fight, in the courts, to keep his place; but he found there would be no use in that. The lawyer had been cunning enough to make sure he was safe, before he went on to steal the old Indian's farm. The law was on his side. Ysidro did not really own the land, according to law, though he had lived on it all his life, and it had been given to his father by the missionaries, almost a hundred years ago.

Does it not seem strange that the law could do such a thing as that? When the boys who read this story grow up to be

men, I hope they will do away with these bad laws, and make better ones.

The way Rea had found out about old Ysidro was this: when Jim went to the post-office for the mail, in the mornings, he used generally to take Anita and Rea in the wagon with him, and leave them at Anita's mother's while he drove on to the post-office, which was a mile farther.

Rea liked this very much. Anita's mother had a big blue and green parrot, that could talk in both Spanish and English; and Rea was never tired of listening to her. She always carried her sugar; and she used to cock her head on one side, and call out, "Señorita! señorita! Polly likes sugar! sugar! sugar!" as soon

as she saw Rea coming in at the door. It was the only parrot Rea had ever seen, and it seemed to her the most wonderful creature in the world.

Ysidro's house was next to Anita's mother's; and Rea often saw the old man at work in his garden, or sitting on his door-step knitting lace, with needles as fine as pins.

One day Anita took her into the house to see Carmena, who was sitting in bed at work on her embroidery. When Carmena heard that Rea was Mr. Connor's niece, she insisted upon giving her a beautiful piece of lace which she had made. Anita did not wish to take it, but old Carmena said,—

" You must take it. Mr. Connor has given us much money, and there was never anything I could do for him. Now if his little señorita will take this, it will be a pleasure."

So Rea carried the lace home, and showed it to her Uncle George, and he said she might keep it; and it was only a few weeks after this that when Anita and Rea went down to San Gabriel, one day, they found the old couple in great distress, the news having come that they were going to be turned out of their house.

And it was the night after this visit that Rea dreamed about the poor old creatures all night, and the very next morning that

she asked her Uncle George if he would not build them a house in his cañon.

After lunch, Mr. Connor said to Rea,—

“I am going to drive this afternoon, Rea. Would you like to come with me?” .

His eyes twinkled as he said it, and Rea cried out,—

“Oh! oh! It is to see Ysidro and Carmena, I am sure!”

“Yes,” said her uncle; “I am going down to tell them you are going to build them a house.”

“Uncle George, will you really, truly, do it?” said Rea. “I think you are the kindest man in all the world!” and she ran for her hat, and was down on the

veranda waiting, long before the horses were ready.

They found old Ysidro sitting on the ground, leaning against the wall of his house. He had his face covered up with both hands, his elbows leaning on his knees.

"Oh, look at him! He is crying, Uncle George," said Rea.

"No, dear," replied Mr. Connor. "He is not crying. Indian men very rarely cry. He is feeling all the worse that he will not let himself cry, but shuts the tears all back."

"Yes, that is lots worse," said Rea.

"How do you know, pet?" laughingly said her uncle. "Did you ever try it?"

"I've tried to try it," said Rea, "and it felt so much worse, I could n't."

It was not easy at first to make old Ysidro understand what Mr. Connor meant. He could not believe that anybody would give him a house and home for nothing. He thought Mr. Connor wanted to get him to come and work; and, being an honest old fellow, he was afraid Mr. Connor did not know how little strength he had; so he said,—

"Señor Connor, I am very old; I am sick too. I am not worth hiring to work."

"Bless you!" said Mr. Connor. "I don't want you to work any more than you do now. I am only offering you a place

to live in. If you are strong enough to do a day's work, now and then, I shall pay you for it, just as I would pay anybody else."

Ysidro gazed earnestly in Mr. Connor's face, while he said this; he gazed as if he were trying to read his very thoughts. Then he looked up to the sky, and he said,—

"Señor, Ysidro has no words. He cannot speak. Will you come into the house and tell Carmena? She will not believe if I tell it."

So Mr. Connor and Rea went into the house, and there sat Carmena in bed, trying to sew; but the tears were running out of her eyes. When she saw Mr. Connor and Rea coming in at the door, she

threw up her hands and burst out into loud crying.

"O señor! señor!" she said. "They drive us out of our house. Can you help us? Can you speak for us to the wicked man?"

Ysidro went up to the bed and took hold of her hand, and, pointing with his other hand to Mr. Connor, said,—

"He comes from God,—the señor. He will help us!"

"Can we stay?" cried Carmena.

Here Rea began to cry.

"Don't cry, Rea," said Mr. Connor. "That will make her feel worse."

Rea gulped down her sobs, enough to say,—

"But she does n't want to come into the

cañon! All she wants is to stay here! She won't be glad of the new house."

"Yes, she will, by and by," whispered Mr. Connor. "Stop crying, that's my good Rea."

But Rea could not. She stood close to the bed, looking into old Carmen's distressed face; and the tears would come, spite of all her efforts.

When Carmen finally understood that not even Mr. Connor, with all his good will and all his money, could save them from leaving their home, she cried again as hard as at first; and Ysidro felt ashamed of her, for he was afraid Mr. Connor would think her ungrateful. But Mr. Connor understood it very well.

"I have lived only two years in my house," he said to Rea, "and I would not change it for one twice as good that anybody could offer me. Think how any one must feel about a house he has lived in all his life."

"But it is a horrible little house, Uncle George," said Rea,—"the dirtiest hovel I ever saw. It is worse than they are in Italy."

"I do not believe that makes much difference, dear," said Uncle George. "It is their home, all the same, as if it were large and nice. It is that one loves."

Just as Mr. Connor and Rea came out of the house, who should come riding by, but the very man that had caused all this

unhappiness,—the lawyer who had taken Ysidro's land! He was with the man to whom he had sold it. They were riding up and down in the valley, looking over all their possessions, and planning what big vineyards and orchards they would plant and how much money they would make.

When this man saw Mr. Connor, he turned as red as a turkey-cock's throat. He knew very well what Mr. Connor thought of him; but he bowed very low.

Mr. Connor returned his bow, but with such a stern and scornful look on his face, that Rea exclaimed,—

“What is the matter, Uncle George? What makes you look so?”

"That man is a bad man, dear," he replied; "and has the kind of badness I most despise." But he did not tell her that he was the man who was responsible for the Indians being driven out of their home. He thought it better for Rea not to know it.

"Are there different sorts of badness,—some badnesses worse than others?" asked Rea.

"I don't know whether one kind is really any worse than another," said Mr. Connor. "But there are some kinds which seem to me twice as bad as others; and meanness and cruelty to helpless creatures seem to me the very worst of all."

"To me too!" said Rea. "Like turning out poor Ysidro."

"Yes," said Mr. Connor. "That is just one of the sort I mean."

Just before they reached the beginning of the lands of Connorloa, they crossed the grounds of a Mr. Finch, who had a pretty house and large orange orchards. Mr. Finch had one son, Harry, about Jusy's age, and the two boys were great cronies.

As Mr. Connor turned the horses' heads into these grounds, he saw Jusy and Harry under the trees in the distance.

"Why, there is Jusy," he said.

"Yes," said Rea. "Harry came for him before lunch. He said he had something to show him."

As soon as Jusy caught sight of the

carriage, he came running towards it, crying,—

“ Oh, Uncle George, stop! Rea! come! I’ve found Snowball! Come, see him!”

Snowball had been missing for nearly a month, and nobody could imagine what had become of him. They finally came to the conclusion that he must have got killed in some way.

Mr. Connor stopped the horses; and Rea jumped out and ran after Jusy, and Mr. Connor followed. They found the boys watching excitedly, one at each end of a little bridge over the ditch, through which the water was brought down for irrigating Mr. Finch’s orchards. Harry’s dogs were there too, one at each end of the bridge,

barking, yelping, watching as excitedly as the boys. But no Snowball.

"Where is he?" cried Rea.

"In under there," exclaimed Jusy. "He's got a rabbit in there; he'll be out presently."

Sure enough, there he was, plainly to be heard, scuffling and spitting under the bridge.

The poor little rabbit ran first to one end of the bridge, then to the other, trying to get out; but at each end he found a dog, barking to drive him back.

Presently Snowball appeared with the dead rabbit in his teeth. Dropping it on the ground, he looked up at the dogs, as much as to say, "There! Can't I

hunt rabbits as well as you do?" Then they all three, the two dogs and he, fell to eating the rabbit in the friendliest manner.

"Don't you think!" cried Jusy. "He's been hunting this way, with these dogs, all this time. You see they are so big they can't get in under the bridge, and he can; so they drive the rabbits in under there, and he goes in and gets them. Is n't he smart? Harry first saw him doing it two weeks ago, he says. He didn't know it was our cat, and he wondered whose it could be. But Snowball and the dogs are great friends. They go together all the time; and wherever he is, if he hears them bark,

he knows they've started up something, and he comes flying! I think it is just splendid!"

"Poor little thing!" said Rea, looking at the fast-disappearing rabbit.

"Why, you eat them yourself!" shouted Jusy. "You said it was as good as chicken, the other day. It is n't any worse for cats and dogs to eat them, than it is for us; is it, Uncle George?"

"I think Jusy has the best of the argument this time, pet," said Uncle George, looking fondly at Jusy.

"Girls are always that way," said Harry politely. "My sisters are just so. They can't bear to see anything killed."

After this day, Rea spent most of her

time in the cañon, watching the men at work on Ysidro's house.

The cañon was a wild place; it was a sort of split in the rocky sides of the mountain; at the top it was not much more than two precipices joined together, with just room enough for a brook to come down. You can see in the picture where it was, though it looks there like little more than a groove in the rocks. But it was really so big in some places that huge sycamore trees grew in it, and there were little spaces of good earth, where Mr. Connor had planted orchards.

It was near these, at the mouth of the cañon, that he put Ysidro's house. It was built out of mud bricks, called adobe, as

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near as possible like Ysidro's old house,— two small rooms, and a thatched roof made of reeds, which grew in a swamp.

But Mr. Connor did not call it Ysidro's house. He called it Rea's house; and the men called it "the *señorita's* house." It was to be her own, Mr. Connor said,— her own to give as a present to Ysidro and Carmena.

When the day came for them to move in, Jim went down with the big wagon, and a bed in the bottom, to bring old Carmena up. There was plenty of room in the wagon, besides, for the few little bits of furniture they had.

Mr. Connor and Jusy and Rea were at the house waiting, when they came. The

cook had made a good supper of meat and potato, and Rea had put it on the table, all ready for them.

When they lifted Carmena out of the wagon, she held, tight clutched in her hand, a small basket filled with earth; she seemed hardly willing to let go of it for a moment.

"What is that?" said Jusy.

"A few handfuls of the earth that was ours," replied Ysidro. "We have brought it with us, to keep it always. The man who has our home will not miss it."

The tears came into Mr. Connor's eyes, and he turned away.

Rea did not understand. She looked puzzled; so did Jusy.

Jim explained. "The Indian women often do that," he said. "When they have to move away from a home they love they carry a little of the earth with them; sometimes they put it in a little bag, and wear it hanging on their necks; sometimes they put it under their heads at night."

"Yes," said Carmena, who had listened to what Jim said. "One can sleep better on the earth that one loves."

"I say, Rea!" cried Jusy. "It is a shame they had to come away!"

"I told you so, Jusy," said Rea gently. "But you didn't seem to care then."

"Well, I do now!" he cried. "I didn't think how bad they'd feel. Now if it were in Italy, I'd go and tell the King all about

it. Who is there to tell here?" he continued, turning to his Uncle George. "Who is there here, to tell about such things? There must be somebody."

Mr. Connor smiled sadly. "The trouble is, there are too many," he said.

"Who is above all the rest?" persisted Jusy. "Is n't there somebody at the top, as our King is in Italy?"

"Yes, there is one above all the rest," replied Mr. Connor. "We call him the President."

"Well, why don't you write and tell him about Ysidro?" said Jusy. "I wish I could see him, I'd tell him. It's a shame!"

"Even the President could not help this,

Jusy," said Mr. Connor. "The law was against poor Ysidro; there was no help; and there are thousands and thousands of Indians in just the same condition he is."

"Does n't the President make the laws?" said Jusy.

"No," said Mr. Connor. "Congress makes the laws."

"Oh," said Jusy, "like our Parliament."

"Yes," said Mr. Connor.

Jusy said no more; but he thought of little else all the afternoon; and at bedtime he said to Rea,—

"Rea, I am real sorry I did n't care about those old Indians at first, when you did. But I'm going to be good to them now, and help them all I can; and

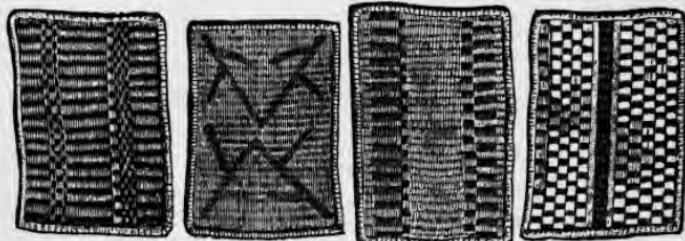
I have made up my mind that when I am a man I shall not go to Italy, as I said I would, to be an officer for the King. I shall stay here, and be an officer for the American President, instead; and I shall tell him about Ysidro, and about all the rest of the Indians."

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There is nothing more to be told about the Hunter Cats. By degrees they disappeared: some of them went to live at other houses in the San Gabriel Valley; some of them ran off and lived a wild life in the cañons; and some of them, I am afraid, must have died for want of food.

Rea was glad when they were all gone; but Jusy missed the fun of seeing them hunt gophers and linnets.

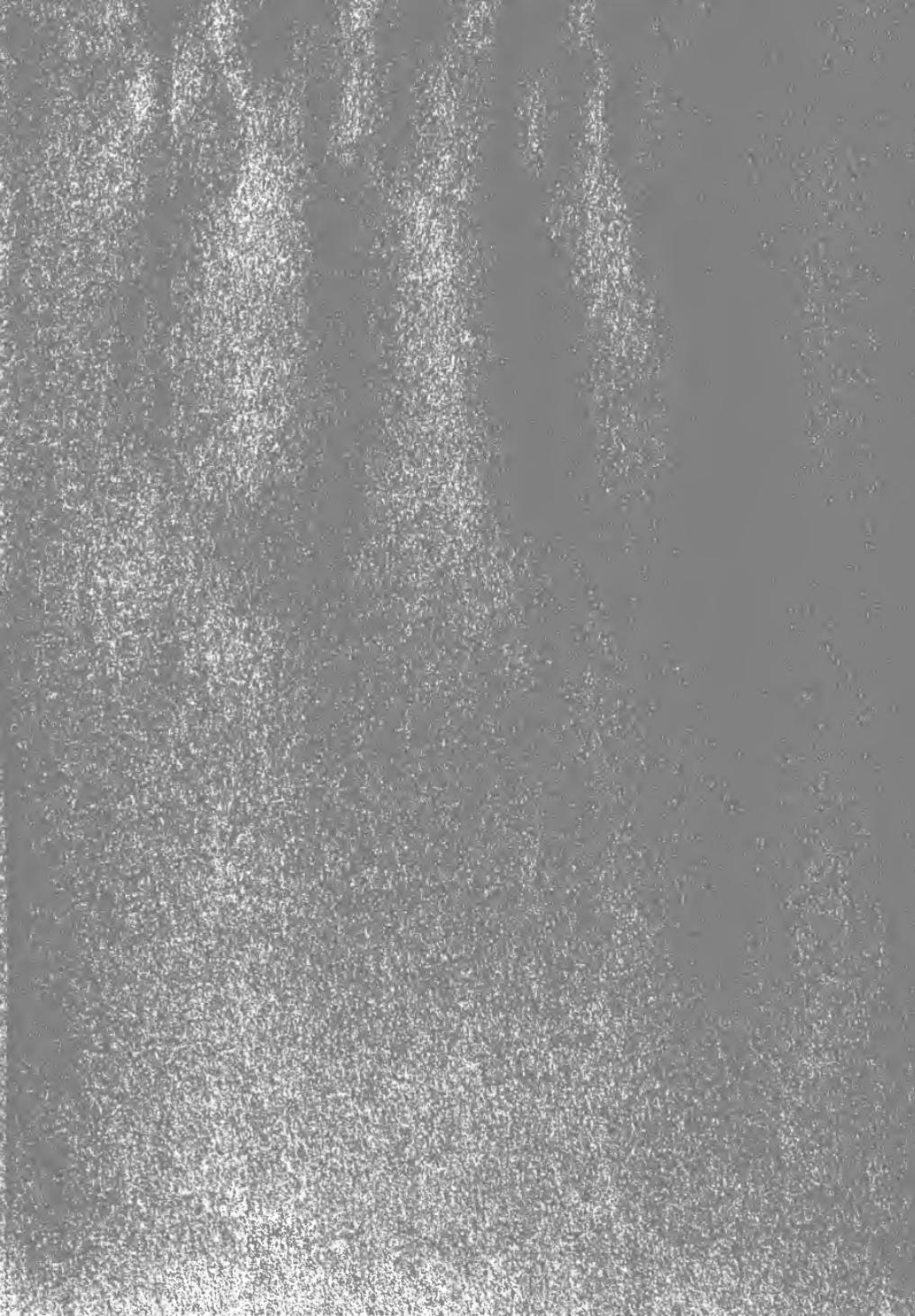
Perhaps, some day, I shall write another story, and tell you more about Jusy and Rea, and how they tried to help the Indians.



MATS MADE BY YSIDRO.—Page 126.







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